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DOROTHY FORSTER

A Novel

By WALTER BESANT

AUTHOR OF 'ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN,' 'THE CAPTAINS' ROOM,' 'ALL IN A GARDEN FAIR,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

London

CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1884

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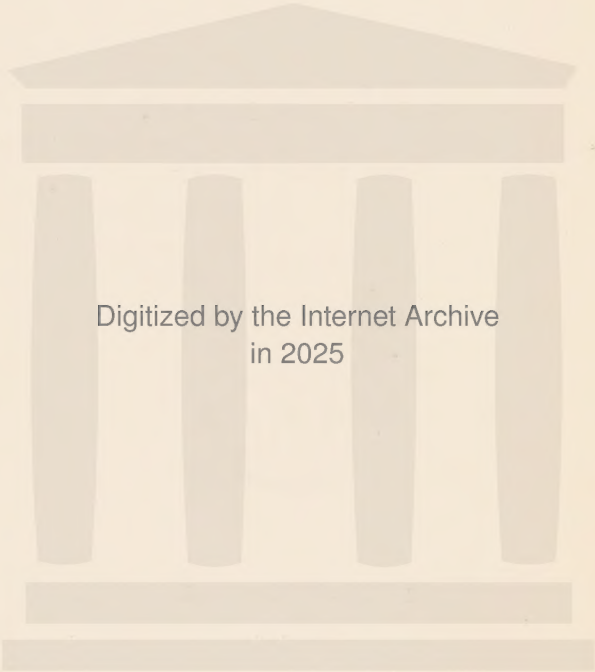
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TO

M. G. B.

AND

E. F. L.

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DOROTHY FORSTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

Those who are so happy as to be born and to live out their appointed time in the North Country are not only removed from the luxuries and vices of London, but also from that wicked modern fashion of scoffing at the things which lie beyond man's comprehension, and should therefore be accounted sacred. We of Northumberland certainly do not pretend disbelief in what is sufficiently proved, but cannot be understood. Almost everybody (every woman, indeed, without exception) has seen, some time or other, strange and wonderful things which cannot be explained. Some, it is true, have endeavoured to reason these

things away by pretending the insensible and brute action of chance (among them, Mr. Hilyard tells me, a great Latin poet, named Lucretius), which is incredible unless we allow the round world and all that is therein to have been itself constructed and set a-going by accident. Others, still living, attribute the stories which abound among us to foolish credulity and ignorant superstition; unto such persons there is no answer but the evidence of things related and testified. Others again, whose opinion is to be received with respect, think they perceive in them the workings of man's Chief Enemy. Let me, however, for my own part, following the expressed opinion of Mr. Hilyard and what I believe to have been that of my lord the late bishop, continue to think that what is permitted, though it be not understood, must be received with reverence and without too close scrutiny, as doubtless intended for no other purpose than a merciful one, *videlicet*, the admonition of the guilty and the encouragement of the virtuous.

To those, again, who ask (seeking to throw discredit upon these beliefs by means of an

idle laugh) why the things of which I speak are more common in the north than in the south of England—that is to say, why ghosts, spectres, witches, warlocks, elves, demons, fairies or faws, waufs, warnings, and other strange manifestations and mysterious powers, continue in the North Country, yet are rarely reported from the Home counties or south of Tyne—I would venture to reply that (supposing the fact to be so) I know, indeed, of no other reason for the undoubted favour shown to us in this respect than the great superiority of Northumbrians over all other Englishmen in the matter of valour, strength, loyalty, and learning—I mean, of course, when they apply themselves to study, for, as everybody knows, the gentlemen of the north are fonder of sport than of books. As for the piety of my people, much might be said and much confessed or allowed. We have, doubtless, the reputation of being hard drinkers and ready strikers; and we are also accused of smuggling and cattle-lifting. These charges are doubtless true, and cannot be denied, though of late years there has been amendment, and one should remember that there

has never been a time until the present when a Northumberland man could look for continued peace or respite from fighting; nor could a rich man lie down at night with any certainty that he might not awake in the morning to find himself a poor man, his cattle lifted and his barns fired; nor could he fall asleep with an assurance that he would not be roused at night by the blazing turf, and have to 'boot and saddle and ride after marauders, pistol in holster, sword by side, and firelock on shoulder. This has made a race of men quick to fight and careless of life, since, willy nilly, they went daily in peril; and many families there are whose men, until a hundred years ago, never knew what it was to die in their beds. So much must be allowed my countrymen as an excuse for their readiness to strike. As to their drinking, true it is that the gentry drink much wine of France and Spain, Rhenish, claret, and mountain, with brandy, usquebaugh, Hollands, ale, cider, punch, mum, cordials, and strong waters of every kind, while the common sort follow the example of their betters as far as they can afford (in which I blame them not): but still our rough

country fellows are not, so far as I know, so drunken as the rabble of London.

And as for religion, I dare maintain that no gentlemen in England go to church with greater regularity than those of Northumberland, or more dutifully repeat the responses; while the country people, though there are many parts where there is no church at all for them, do still keep up with zeal the observance, with all customary marks of respect, of the great days of the Church—that is to say, feasting on New Year's Day and Candlemas, fighting their cocks on Shrove Tuesday, eating parched peas on Carling Sunday, carrying round the plough at Christmas, getting up to see the sun dance at Easter Day, on May Day beating the bounds, according to ancient custom of the Church; and all with the drinking of ale continually, both small ale and October, according to their means, and plenty of honest quarter-staff, bull and badger baiting, wrestling and boxing, to keep up the spirits of the people. Moreover, there are among us, though many staunch Catholics, few, indeed, of the vermin who, under the name of Independents, Nonconformists, Whigs,

and what not, have within the last eighty years murdered one King, driven another from his throne, and do still keep a third from the noble inheritance and earthly crown which are his by Divine Right. These reasons seem to me quite sufficient, without further inquiry, to account for the great blessings which we of the North Country enjoy in the shape of visits and messages from the dead, supernatural warnings, with omens, prognostications, and the spirit of prophecy. As regards fairies and certain strange spectres which are reported to linger among our old ruins, I say nothing: first, because I cannot understand the purpose served in the Great Universal Scheme by the race of fairies; and next, because, as regards the spectres, it is a thing incomprehensible to me why the ghosts of mere obscure and lowly-born persons, such as Cuddy the Reaper or Nelly the Knocker, should be allowed so great a distinction as to continue among us, although it is seemly and becoming that the souls of great persons, such as that of the late Countess of Derwentwater (which I hear hath been recently reported to have been seen by many at Dilston) should be allowed to remain on

earth as long as they please, either for the sake of weeping over the past, or of lingering in spots formerly loved, until they can take their place in Heaven.

On the Eve of St. John, in the year 1703, when Thomas Forster, Esquire, of Etherston, the elder, was Sheriff for Northumberland, I, Dorothy, his daughter, was at the Manor House, Bamborough, where I was staying under charge of my old nurse Judith, in order to see the Midsummer Fire. 'Twas the same year in which my elder brother Thomas, coming of age, entered into possession of that noble inheritance of the Bamborough estates, to which he was heir in coparceny with my aunt Dorothy, Lady Crewe. The estates included the village and Manor House, with the castle by the sea, and a great many other lands, manors, farms, and houses, of which an account shall presently be given. The house on this evening was filled with his companions, come to see the famous midnight fire; and after the manner of young gentlemen, they were killing the time between supper and twelve of the clock with drinking and singing.

The fire was built every year upon the seashore north of the castle, where a broad space of level sand lies between the links and the water, uncovered even at high tide. The custom of the St. John Baptist's Fire goeth back beyond the memory of man—it is so ancient that its origin is lost: it is so much esteemed that the folk would no more think of letting it be forgotten or neglected than the girls would forget to dream of husbands on St. Agnes' Eve, or to hide the men's shoes on Easter morning. Mr. Hilyard, who hath always something to say concerning the ancient world, will have it that the Midsummer Fire is nothing in the world but a pagan rite, *videlicet*, a fire built and lit in honour of the god Baal, and of Phœnician origin; that is to say, it came from Tyre, of which city Hiram once was king, whose sailors navigated the world in the service of Solomon, as is very well known, bringing to the harbours of the Holy Land gold from India and tin from Britain. For which reason, he saith, and in lasting remembrance of that wise prince, the Church hath done well to continue the practice, and to place under the protection of St. John

Baptist that rite which formerly was part of the worship of a false god, and would, therefore, without such protection, lay open those who practise it to the wiles and temptations of the enemy.

From all quarters the people come a holiday-making, and to see the Bamborough Fire. They come from Lucker and from Spindleton, from the Sea Houses of North Sunderland, from Belford, which is six miles away, and from Ellingham, which is ten. It is the chief annual festival at Bamborough, even greater than the Hagamony carrying of the plough at Alnwick; the gipsies come and set up tents upon the sands; there is always a travelling show or two, with men who do strange things, and booths where gingerbread is sold; and there is all day long cock-fighting, with cudgelling, quarter-staff, and wrestling. The rustics come at daybreak, the farmers ride into the place early in the day, and there is a vast deal of drinking, eating, and singing long before the time comes for firing the pile. The younger men build up the pile with wood, artfully laying dry branches and twigs over and among the big logs, so as to raise a sudden

and lofty flame; the boys look on and run about, and tease and fight each other; the girls are making wreaths and garlands with midsummer rush, vervain, and St. John's wort; the older women and matrons stand together and talk. It is a subject for gratitude to think how simple are the pleasures of country women, since a long talk is, to most, their chief relaxation and delight; their husbands, poor souls, must still be drinking or smoking tobacco, or looking on at fights or banging each other with quarter-staves. As for the older men, if they are of the better sort, they sit together in the inn; and if they are of the lower kind, they commonly lean against door-posts, each with a pannikin in his hand, and slowly drink and slowly speak (because a rustic's words are few, though his wisdom is great) in the soft Northumbrian burr, which I, for one, have ever loved so much, and cannot, if I would, lay aside. The ingenious Mr. De Foe hath lately called it a 'hollow jawing in the throat,' which is, by his leave, a rude and ignorant way of describing it, and more fitly applied to the rough talk of the Border Scotch. It is a way of speaking which

cannot be set down on paper, therefore all that follows is written as if it had been spoken in the mincing, affected way of St. James's Street, or the rough tongue of the London mob.

'Oh, nurse!' I cried, 'when will it be midnight?'

'Patience, lass,' replied the old woman. 'Time is a sluggard for the young, but for the old he gallops.'

I was sitting in the parlour with my old nurse Judith, waiting impatiently for the time; the loud talk of the gentlemen was heard from the dining-room. Presently my eyelids began to close, and my restless fingers became still. Then my head fell upon the tall back of the chair, and I was asleep. Nurse let me sleep till the clock struck two-quarters after eleven, when she awoke me, put on my hat, and tied a handkerchief about my neck, and so we sallied forth. As we left the house, the cold air, the shouts of the people outside, and the singing of the gentlemen within—

'When candlesticks they serve for bells;
And frying-pans they use for ladles;
And in the sea they dig for wells;
And porridge-pots they use for cradles—'

completely awakened me, and I shivered, threw up my head, and felt no more sleepiness, and ran, laughing and shouting, to the sand-hills from which I was to see the show.

The night was clear, with never a cloud, and a bright full moon riding in the sky—yet in this season, even at midnight, it is so light that there needs no moon. The wind had dropped, and the waves, which sometimes break so high and terrible on this coast, were now little ripples which rolled along the sand in a whisper. Above the sands the great castle stood, a grand sight to behold, its rugged walls either showing white in the moonlight, or, where in deep shadow, black and gloomy, until the red blaze of the bonfire presently lit them up, and made them yet more awful.

The sands were crowded with the noisy people. In the midst stood the great pile waiting for the torch. Everybody was talking, laughing, shouting, and singing. Upon the sea there lay a broad belt of white moonlight, very pretty to look upon. To me, thinking of what Mr. Hilyard had told me, it seemed that perhaps when King Solomon's

sailors came they may have built their idolatrous fire on the same place, and by the light of the same moon. But perhaps there were then as yet no Forsters in Northumberland. They are, it may be admitted, of later date than the age of Solomon and King Hiram. Perhaps, too, there was no castle. It seemed to me a great pity that Solomon's sailors should come so far and not be able to see the castle after all; and this, although they had the glories of the Temple should they get home in safety to the ports of Joppa, Sidon, and Tyre. But then the clock struck twelve, and suddenly the fire blazed up, and in a moment seized on the whole of the pile, and rolled upward in vast great tongues of flame, with a cracking and roaring very frightful to behold and hear.

'Thus,' said Mr. Hilyard once, 'thus the false prophets on Carmel danced and shouted round their altars; through such a fire the children were passed.'

Indeed, when one remembers the wild faces of the men and women who leaped about that fire, there remains no doubt that in the madness caused by the blaze and roar of the

flames, and the drink they had taken, and the shouts and dancing, it needed little to make even our own people toss their little ones through the flames, as, it is said, but I know not with what truth, is done to this day by the wild Kerns of Ireland.

In half-an-hour the first fury of the flames was spent, the small branches being all burnt, and there remained only the steady burning of the big logs. And then the young men began to leap with shouts across the fire, and the girls threw their wreaths upon it and sang again, and again danced round and round the pile.

'Let us go, Judith,' said I, frightened by all this shouting.

'Wait, child,' the old woman replied. 'Wait, my dearie; they are going to bring out the Midsummer Witch. We will go down and learn thy fortune.'

At this point, indeed, there was a rush of the boys, always the most zealous in every ceremony or public entertainment, across the sands, over which was now seen approaching a procession of half-a-dozen girls, walking slowly, and singing a kind of hymn. In their

midst, as one could presently discern, there walked a girl dressed all in white, and veiled from head to foot. Her companions were carrying, according to custom, wreaths of vervain, midsummer rush, St. John's wort, and mother-wort.

'Tis Jenny Lee,' said Nurse Judith, half to herself. 'They told me she was to be the St. John's Eve Witch. A proper witch, I warrant. As for her father, sure he gave a love-drink to her mother, else how should an honest farmer's wench go follow a gipsy tramp, even though he wedded her in church and called himself the king of his thievish people, and was, as a body might say, as well set up a man with as fine a leg as a woman can desire, and as proud as Lucifer—Lord forgive us! And on Midsummer Eve!' She looked round as if she expected something fearful with claws and fiery eyes, and crossed herself—a Papistical custom, but common in Northumberland. 'If you want a witch, you needn't go farther than his daughter. They say she can do things already for which in the old times a poor old woman would be burned —my own great-grandmother for one, in

King James's time. But that's a hundred years ago, and the world is changed. Witches can come and go without let or hindrance, which is a shame in a Christian country. Yet it is a blessed thing to live in times when there is no fear of being burned for a witch when you are only old and toothless. Did I tell you, my dearie, how I once saw a witch fly across the moon, broomstick and all?'

She had often told me that story; but even at that tender age I could not believe how a cloud, as it seemed to everybody else, should be to her a witch astride of a broomstick.

'To tell fortunes,' Judith went on, 'one must either be a witch or a gipsy. Jenny is both gipsy and witch, they say. Look! Here comes his honour with the gentlemen and Mr. Hilyard.

As the procession came across the sands, the white-veiled figure looking strange and ghastly in the moonlight, the gentlemen came out of the house and walked arm-in-arm down the street towards the shore. My brother Tom, it may be supposed, had taken a glass more than the strength of his head allowed, for he staggered a little as he went. With him were

two or three of his friends—Ned Swinburne and Jack Swinburne, brothers of Sir William of Capheaton; Mad Jack Hall, of Otterbourne, whose presence always foreboded misfortune to the Forsters; young Mr. Peregrine Widdrington, brother to my lord; and Mr. Antony Hilyard, Tom's former tutor. They all trooped along together, noisily laughing.

By this time the girls had placed the Midsummer Witch on a sort of throne or stool of state covered with red cloth and flowers.

'The Midsummer Witch must be a maid,' said Judith, 'and a firstborn child, else the spell will not work.'

They placed in her hand a vessel of some kind with a long and narrow neck.

'It is filled with water,' continued Judith, 'drawn by herself from the sea on this very evening. Now, child, double thumb and come along.'

Everybody knows that to double your thumb in your right hand averts danger. I complied, and thus secured we ran down the hillock, and joined the group.

The villagers were standing round their newly-made witch in a respectful ring, the

middle of which was occupied by Tom and his friends.

'Now, fair witch and pretty sorceress,' said he, pretending not to know the veiled girl, 'tell us our fortunes, and we will reward thee with a kiss, if your ghostship allows us to see your face.'

But everybody knew very well who was the witch.

'Your honour must put something of your own in the jar,' said Judith.

Meantime the veiled girl sat as if she heard nothing; in her lap the jar, and her hands folded round it.

'Drop your ring in it,' whispered Judith. 'No need to tell her your name or the name of any gentleman. She is veiled, and cannot see.'

Mr. Forster drew a signet-ring, engraved with his arms, from his finger, and placed it in the narrow-necked jar.

'Now,' he said, laughing, 'tell me the fortune of the ring and its owner.'

She put her hand into the vessel, and took out the ring. Then she replied slowly, as if she were looking for words fitting the fortune she was to tell:

'Great place, great chase : near the grave, yet one to save.
Great name, great blame ; far off to die, at home to lie.'

That was a strange fortune : what could it mean ?

'I said she was a witch,' murmured Judith. 'Take back your ring, sir.'

The girl held out her open hand. Strange! the stone had fallen from the ring, and lay upon her palm.

'Lucky,' said my brother, 'that it did not fall in the sand. The sea-water loosened it. "Great name,"' he continued, a little sobered; 'what is it? "Great blame," or "great fame" —"far off to die"—well, what man can die more than once? "At home to lie"—one would wish to lie with one's own people. "Great blame!"—who cares for blame? A good fortune this. Now, Ned, try your luck.'

Mr. Edward Swinburne, a young man of my brother's age or thereabouts, stepped forward, and placed a piece of money in the jar.

Said the girl, taking out the money :

'Prison walls and prison bed;
Who lies there is stark and dead.'

'I wish to heaven, Tom,' said the young man angrily, 'that we had stayed at home, and sat out t'other bottle.'

Then Perry Widdrington took his place.

The oracle was more pleasant to hear. The voice of the girl was low, and she never moved the whole time :

> 'Danger by land and danger by sea :
> Yet your death at last in your bed shall be.'

'Thank you for nothing, witch,' said Peregrine, stepping back.

'As for me,' said mad Jack Hall, whom none of the Forsters, except Tom, loved, because his presence seems to bode misfortune to us—besides, a man of forty had no business drinking and carousing with these young men —'as for me, I will have none of thy fortune, good nor bad. There's plenty good and plenty bad in the locker. Good or bad, what matters, so there's beef on board and drink in can ?'

His rosy face looked as if he had already taken as much drink out of the can as he could well hold.

'Come, brave toper—come, my lusty Tony,' cried the lad Peregrine, clapping Mr. Hilyard on the shoulder : 'try thy fortune, man !'

The young man ought to have shown more reverence to the scholar, but learning and Perry Widdrington did not indeed regard each other with respect. Besides, the truth is that Mr. Hilyard was himself somewhat inclined to stagger as he went.

Mr. Hilyard was a young man then, although so learned. Perhaps he was about five or six and twenty. He wore no hat, his wig was awry and out of curl; his cheeks were red, his neckcloth was disordered; he stood behind the others, as if he did not by right of birth (which was the case) belong to them. His merry laughing face, when the fire lit it up, seemed filled with the joy of wine and song: the poet Anacreon (whose verses he afterwards translated) could not have been more jovial to look upon. His nose was broad, his lips full; his eyes were large, his figure short and squab.

'My fortune?' he asked, with a laugh—though why should he laugh over so grave a matter as his own fate? 'My fortune? What better fortune than to drink and royster among the gentlemen of Northumberland?'

However, he placed a coin in the girl's jar,

and waited as if he was ready for anything besides that fortune might have for him.

'Fortune has no more to give me,' Mr. Hilyard said presently. 'Or, if anything, she keeps it concealed in a basket, as the Egyptian his secret, who, to one asking, replied, "Since thou seest it covered what impudence is this, to inquire into a hidden thing?" Keep silence, priestess.'

But the girl gave his fortune :

'Love a fair girl all your life,
Yet shalt never have a wife.
Thou shalt rise and she shall fall ;
Fear not—thou wilt top them all.'

'Why,' cried Mr. Hilyard, 'here is an excellent fortune indeed! Good Sybil, I thank thee. Yet Haman rose and topped them all. So did Stylites, and so doth Steeple Jack. So does every poor devil at Tyburn Tree. Nevertheless, I thank thee. Delphic oracles are ever obscure. And there are many ways of rising—did one only know them.'

'Enough fooling,' said my brother. 'Judith, give the girl a shilling for her trouble.' He tossed her the coin. 'Come, Ned—come,

Peregrine—come, Jack! Let us go back and crack t'other bottle.'

They returned as they had come, arm-in-arm, tramping up the road, and the scholar began to sing as they went. He had a clear, sweet voice:

'He drank till night, and he drank till noon,
The thirst in his gullet was such;
He never could drink a drop too soon—too soon:
And never, never, never—no—never—
Never a drop too much.'

I whispered, 'Judith,' when they were quite gone, 'let me now try my fortune, too. Is it not my turn now?'

But Judith was shaking her head.

'That shall you not,' she said angrily. 'Here is a fine Midsummer Witch for you, with her bad luck for everybody! Heard one ever the like? I would duck her in the sea for two straws. And for all these gallant gentlemen, too!'

'Oh, nurse!' But the oracle sat as if she heard not. 'Nurse, I must have my fortune told—I must indeed.'

'Yes—yes,' cried the women of the village, pressing round. 'Miss Dorothy's fortune! Let us have Miss Dorothy's fortune, too.'

Judith gave way. She was as curious as the rest to know what this wonderful Midsummer Witch would say. Yet she was afraid.

'Hast ever a crooked pin about thee, child?' she asked. 'So—this will do. Drop it in the jar. Now—double thumb again, child.'

The girl once more put her hand into the jar, and brought out the pin. As for me, I waited in a strange expectancy. Oh, what would she give me? For the moment I felt as if this farmer's wench, whose father was but a common gipsy, actually knew the will of Heaven and could control the future. Impious thought! And yet—it is truly wonderful—one knows not how—one cannot say why—the predictions of humble women are so often fulfilled. Nurse Judith's great-grandmother—the one who was burned for a witch—predicted, as everybody still remembers, the tempest which blew down the roof of Belford Church, and on her way to the stake foretold a sudden and violent death for him who bore witness against her. Wonderful to relate, the man was, only a year afterwards, done to death in a fray with the Redesdale

men. Yet that little Jenny Lee, a milkmaid, a dairymaid, who dropped me a curtsey when she passed me—that she should—it was impossible! What she said, however, was ambiguous enough for any fortune:

> 'Lovers one, and two, and three,
> Lovers of high and of low degree,
> None of them all shall her husband be.'

If none of my lovers was to become my husband, I thought, whom should I have to marry?

'Poor lass!' the women murmured. ''Tis a strange unlucky night for the quality.'

It is a foolish thing that one should remember such a childish play, but I never forgot any of the fortunes told on that Midsummer Eve. Nor, I think, did my nurse, as long as she lived, which was for ten years more. But now Judith dragged me away roughly, though the oracle had not yet finished telling the fortunes.

'Come, child,' she said. 'It is bed-time. Fuss enough made about a girl; silly talk—though 'tis St. John's Eve and all. Come, Dorothy! a maid of ten has got nothing to do

with lovers. Lovers, indeed! Who ever heard of such things?'

She, however, did heed them very much, for her lips kept muttering as we came away from the great fire, round which the country people were now pressing and crowding together to know their fortune. What Jenny told them, I know not, but there now arose shouts of laughter. Yet to me it seemed as if they ought not to laugh when such melancholy fortunes had been told, and while the great fire—the fire of Baal—was still burning clear and bright, a terrible thing to look upon, just as it had done long ago when Solomon's sailors landed here, before King Ida built the castle, and before ever a Forster was seen in the North Country.

'"Far off to die, at home to lie,"' Judith muttered. 'What did the child mean? Where did she learn it? I hope his honour may not be disturbed by such a thing.'

His honour was not, because, with his companions, he was put to bed that night too drunk to remember anything.

'Why, to be sure,' the nurse went on, 'it is only a play. And yet it is an old play,

and we must never let it drop, or bad luck will come to us. Nobody knows who is abroad on such a night as this. Spirits whisper—I felt a cold breath on my own cheek just now. 'Tis a fearful night. Say prayers, my dear, and get to sleep.'

Late as I had gone to bed, I was up betimes and dressed by six. When I went down the stairs I found Mr. Hilyard already up, and talking with no other than the girl Jenny Lee herself at the door.

I know not whether he had been, like the others, drunk the night before. He was quite sober now, and composed and grave in his manner, as becomes a scholar and was his wont in the morning. But his eyes were red, as sometimes happens after much wine.

'Come, girl,' he was saying, 'thou shalt not put me off with nonsense. Who taught thee the rhymes?'

Jenny was a tall girl of twelve or thirteen, who might have been seventeen, so well grown was she. Judith called her a gipsy: her father, who was dead, belonged to that race. She had a gipsy's black hair and bright black

eyes; also a gipsy's swarthy skin, red lips, and white teeth. She bore on her head a pail of milk. When Mr. Hilyard spoke to her she looked confused, and hesitated.

'Come,' he said. 'Here is little Miss Dorothy. As you hope for any favour from this young lady, tell us where you learned those fortunes.'

'Perhaps they were whispered by the spirits,' said the girl impudently. 'Everybody knows that on St. John's Eve the good people are about.'

'Perhaps they were not whispered. Perhaps I know where they came from.'

I suppose there was something in his look which she read, because she dropped her eyes.

'Telling misfortunes to gentlefolk is no laughing matter, my girl. Such prophecies sometimes bring their own fulfilment. It is recorded of Marius—but that concerns thee not. Who was it, Jenny?'

'Granny,' she whispered. 'Granny. Oh, she is a proper witch!'

'Of course, I knew it,' he replied. 'Yet I saw none of your people among the gipsies yesterday.'

She replied that, in fact, they were in trouble, one of them having been unjustly hanged for stealing a sheep (the whole tribe being ready to swear an *alibi*), and another having been recently flogged through the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed; and that as regards Bamborough, the last time they were camped in that place there were so many complaints about pigs, geese, and even cows dying suddenly and mysteriously (their bodies being taken away by the gipsies and eaten), and so many threats of throwing the old woman into the pond for a witch, that they were afraid of coming any nearer. She was indeed—I knew her well—a most wonderful and terrible old woman to look at, being doubled up with rheumatism, and wrinkled and puckered in the face very curiously, yet with a pair of coal-black eyes which shone like fire.

'She cast the fortunes of the gentlemen and Miss Dorothy with the cards,' Jenny Lee went on; 'and yours too, sir. Oh, granny's words come true—every one!'

'Where did your people come from last?' asked Mr. Hilyard.

'They came from Lancashire, by way of

Shotley; and they are going to Wooler first, and then across the Cheviots and to Jedburgh.'

'From Lancashire.'

Mr. Hilyard stroked his chin and looked grave. Presently he began to speak with her eagerly in a tongue which I did not understand. Yet I knew very well that it was the language of the gipsy folk, and that Mr. Hilyard could talk it, being a most ingenious gentleman who could speak many languages, such as Dutch and French, and even thieves' tongue, which they call Canting. This he learned in London, while lurking (at great risk of being knocked o' the head) among the thieves and rogues of that great and wicked city. I believe there were also other weighty reasons, known to Oxford vintners and others who had trusted him, why for a time he should lie snug. You will hear presently how a person so learned and of such curious accomplishments became a resident in our house, and our dependent.

After a serious talk, Jenny went away, dropping me a curtsey without letting the pail fall from her head, or a drop of milk to

be spilled. Then Mr. Hilyard hemmed twice, and said:

'I was saying to the girl, Miss Dorothy, that the poultry of Bamboroughshire must not be stolen, or rogues will meet their deserts.'

This he may have said among other things, but I knew very well indeed that he had sent a much more important message. In those days of unquiet, when there were secret communications and letters constantly passing from hand to hand, and especially between Lancashire and Northumberland, even a child could understand that in some way or other Mr. Hilyard and the old gipsy woman were concerned in letter-carrying.

'It is strange,' he went on, speaking gravely, and with his eyes fixed, as if he was reading from a book, which was his way—'it is strange that the girl doth not forget the language of her father's people, though her mother brought her away so young. Much I fear that when she grows older she will leave the ways of Christian folk and follow with the camp. 'Tis a strange wild people! Nor hath it ever been made certain whence they came

or where they were first seen, though some say Bohemia and some say Egypt. As for their language, which I have been at some pains to learn, that seems to have in it something of the Chaldæan. Meantime forget, child, the pretended oracles of this gipsy Delphic. As for his honour, your brother, he will doubtless in some way achieve greatness, as his grandfather before him, Sir William, sheriff of the county; and what the witch says is true, that great name brings great blame. Themistocles is recorded to have compared himself to a tree, the leaves of which are plucked by every passer-by; yet in days of heat they all run to it for shelter. And as for prophecy, every man is *Faber Fortunæ*, or maker of his own fortune, which is the reason why some do spoil themselves in haste and hurry of making; so that we may admire the wisdom of Vespasian, who stamped his coin with a dolphin and an anchor, and the legend, *Soon enough if well enough*. Forget the oracles, child: seek not to know the intentions of Providence: and doubtless when your brother and the gentlemen are ready to take their breakfast, they will have forgotten,

by reason of the potency of his honour's port, the predictions of last night.'

It is, indeed, as difficult to keep a gentleman of Northumberland from wine as a woman from talk.

'The goats of Candia,' Mr. Hilyard resumed, stroking his chin, and changing his manner, 'being shot with an arrow, straightway choose the herb dittany in order to cure the wound; the tortoise, having eaten a viper, seeks for wild marjoram; the dragon, when his sight fails, cleans his eyes with fennel. Cranes, for the good of the stomach, drink sea-water. The wise man, Miss Dorothy, after a bottle or two of port overnight, taketh a tankard of small-beer in the morning.'

He disappeared, in search of his remedy, and I saw him no more that morning. At noon the gentlemen took their breakfast, and presently rode away all together, laughing and shouting, and I never heard from any of them mention or remembrance of this oracle of St. John's Eve.

CHAPTER II.

THE FORSTERS.

THERE are in Northumberland (one may thank Heaven for it) as many Forsters as there are Fenwicks, and more. First, it hath been said, but irreverently, the Lord made Adam and Eve; and then He made the Forsters. They are, indeed, as ancient a family as any in the county; as ancient in the county as the Percys, who belong also to Sussex, and are now swallowed up by the Seymours; or the Radcliffes, who came from Cumberland. The ancient and original seat of the Forsters from time immemorial has been at Etherston, which is, being interpreted, the Adder Stone. An old ring of the family, now in possession of my brother, John Forster, Esquire, of Etherston, commemorates

the origin of the name, being shaped like unto a twisted viper with his tail in his mouth, and set with a precious stone. There is a snake or dragon connected with many old and illustrious families: for instance, there is the loathly worm of Spindleston; there is the dragon of the Lambtons of Durham; there is the Conyers' dragon; there is a Sussex dragon; and the princely House of Lusignan, I am told by Mr. Hilyard, is descended from Melusine, a witch, or sorceress, who was half-woman, half-serpent. The legend of the Forsters' adder is lost. Mr. Hilyard once made a ballad or song about it, but so full of knights, shepherds, nymphs, and cool grots (of which there are not many in our part of the county), that I thought it fantastical, although ingenious. The shield of the Forsters is—argent: a chevron vert between three bugle-horns stringed gules, and for crest a bent arm and a hand bearing a broken lance. The Etherston quartering is also argent: on a bend cottised sable three martlets. The motto is 'Si fractus fortis;' but, like the Fenwicks, we have our family legend, namely:

'Let us dearlie then holde
To mynde ther worthines
That which our parents olde
Hath left us to posses.'

There are branches of the Forsters everywhere: at Stokesley in Yorkshire, at Durham (where they are called the 'Friendly Forsters'), at Tuggall Hall, at Aldermarston, at Berwick, in Jamaica (descended, I believe, from Claudius, nephew of Sir Claudius Forster, and my great-great-uncle), in London, and I know not where else. With these branches we have nothing here to do, save to mention them with respect as flourishing offshoots of a brave old stock. Especially, however, to be considered is the noble branch of Bamborough, founded by Sir John Forster, the valiant and trusty Warden of the March, under good Queen Elizabeth, for twenty-seven years, and Governor of Bamborough Castle. It was to his son, Sir Claudius, that King James made a grant of the castle and manor. This made him a man of greater importance than his first cousin, Mr. Forster, of Etherston. Yet it is a proud thing to be the Head of the House, which will ever be the happiness of the Forster who holds Etherston.

The Forsters have always been, like most Northumbrian families, blessed with numerous progeny. One of them had twenty-one sons and a daughter; being unsurpassed in this respect, even in Northumberland, except by Sir William Swinburne's father, who, to be sure, had thirty children. How great a happiness to bring up so many valiant sons to fight England's enemies and maintain the glory of the country! By marriage, especially before the Reformation, into which many noble Houses of the north would never enter, the Forsters were connected with nearly every family of gentle birth in the north; *videlicet*, Lords Crewe, Wharton, Hilton, and Ogle; the Radcliffes, Shaftoes, Swinburnes, Chaytors, Selbys, Herons, Carnabys, Crasters, Ridleys, Fenwicks, Salkelds, Grays of Chillingham and of Howick; the Coles of Brancepeth, and the Ordes. By marriage with a Radcliffe, the Forsters of Bamborough acquired the Manor of Blanchland; and by marriage with a Selby, that of Thornton. One of the Forsters was Lord Chief Justice of England, another was a Puisne Judge; many of them were Sheriffs and Knights of the Shire.

Their history is, in a word, part and parcel of the history of Northumberland itself; that is to say, of the great and glorious realm of England.

This book is written for no other purpose than to set forth the true character of a gallant and honourable gentleman which hath been of late defamed; and especially by one who hath eaten his bread, drunk his wine, and received many favours at his hands. The name of this gentleman is Thomas Forster, generally called the Younger. It was he who commanded the Prince's English forces during the unhappy Rebellion. The hand which writes his history is that of his sister. I am, it is true, unpractised in the penman's art, therefore unskilled in the trick of making the false appear the true. Yet I can narrate faithfully the things which happened; I can show hypocrites and villains, stripped of their disguise, the horrid wretches which they are; and I can tell how gallant gentlemen and loyal subjects of the lawful sovereign of these realms (whom may God restore!) were betrayed to their own undoing.

No one should be able to speak of a man so well as his sister. As for his wife, she knows him only when he has arrived at manhood, and has no knowledge of the time when he was a stripling, inexperienced and ignorant, though perhaps full of brave intentions, or a boy at school under ferule and discipline, or a curly-headed laughing child. The sister remembers the growth of her brother's mind; she has watched (if she be an elder sister) the hesitations of the boy, his first doubtful flights, seeming, like the needle when the compass is shaken, to incline now here, now there, until it settles towards a steady north, as towards the straight and narrow path of honour which leadeth to heaven. To a wife, a man presents himself completed, at his best; like a finished work, a picture framed, a poem written and printed. As for myself, it is true that I remember not my brother Tom as a child, because he was older than myself; but I knew him as a young man while he wore his own hair still tied up by a ribbon, and went about dressed in grey sagathy and woollen stockings, and great thick shoes for weekday use; with broad-

cloth and silver buttons, thread stockings, and silver buckles in his shoes, and a silk ribbon for his hair, on Sundays and holydays. A brave and gallant lad he was, better at hunting than at reading, fonder of sport than of books, hearty with all, ready with a laugh and a friendly word with rich and poor ; and gifted with a natural love for friendliness, companionship, and good-fellowship, which made him beloved of all. He is dead now, and his fortunes broken and gone, and his enemies may say, as in the Otterbourne Ballad :

> 'Now we have carry'd all Bambroughshire,
> All the welthe in the world have we.'

Many have drawn comparisons between Mr. Forster and his gallant companion-in-arms, Lord Derwentwater, to the disadvantage of the former. It hath never been my pretence or opinion that my brother was possessed of a nature so strangely and so richly compounded as that of Lord Derwentwater. He, it must be owned, drew all hearts by qualities as rare as they are admirable. But I make bold to maintain that if loyalty, fidelity, and courage may command respect, then we must give

respect to the memory of Mr. Thomas Forster. These virtues were conspicuous in him, as in all his line. Like a river in a champagne country which runs evenly between its banks, so is the race of Forsters; like the river Coquet, which is now deep, now shallow, now gliding through open fields, now running under rocks, now under high hanging woods, is the race of the Radcliffes: and, like that river, they are most beautiful just before the end.

The father of this Thomas Forster was Thomas Forster, commonly called the Elder, of Etherston. He remained a private gentleman, taking no office until after the death of his cousins of Bamborough. Then he became Sheriff of the County and, between the years 1706 and 1710, Knight of the Shire. In the House of Commons he made no greater figure than a gentleman of Tory and High Church principles generally desires to make. Thus he was never a prater, nor did he waste the time of the House with idle talk and argument, being always well advised beforehand which side was the right, whose arguments would be the better, and prepared to vote, when called

upon, with his friends. He, therefore, acquired the respect which Parliament is always ready to accord to members who sit silent and vote with their party. It would, indeed, have pleased him best could the measures have been brought forward silently, and voted without any speeches at all. 'It was a poor reward,' he said, 'for the fatigue of a journey from Etherston to Newcastle, and from Newcastle to town, to sit out a long and tedious debate, when one's mind was already made up, and argument can produce no more effect than swanshot on the back of a tortoise.' He married, while in his twenty-first year, his second cousin Frances, daughter of Sir William Forster of Bamborough. By her he had issue, namely, Thomas Forster, aforesaid; John, who is now the possessor of Etherston; Margaret, the eldest of the family, married to Sir William Bacon, of Staward; Elizabeth and William, who both died young; and myself, Dorothy. It was the misfortune of these children that their mother, who was as virtuous and prudent as she was beautiful, died while they were all of tender years, and I, for one, but a little lassie indeed, too young to feel the blow which

had fallen upon us, and too ignorant to join in the resentment which filled the breasts of my elders when my father, forgetting the incomparable virtues of the wife he had buried, married a second time. This marriage lasted but a short while, ending most tragically in the shooting by accident of madam. Would not one think that any man would plainly see in the death of two wives the direct injunction of Heaven to wed no more? Yet my father tempted Providence and married a third time, his wife being now a certain Barbara Lawes, from the South Country, whose birth was not such as to warrant this elevation, and who understood not the Northumberland people, or their speech, or their ways. She brought her husband two children, Ralph, who lived to be thirty years of age, and Mary, now married respectably to Mr. Proctor.

As to my father, he was the easiest and kindest of men; all he asked for in the world was rest and a quiet life; to this he was surely entitled by reason of his birth, his fortune, and his good health. His fortune was moderate: an estate of some few hundreds a year, and a house as good as any, except the great castles,

in the county. Etherston Hall is a mile or so from the little hamlet of Lucker, and four miles from Bamborough. It is a large, square house, as full of modern conveniences as any gentleman may desire; the sitting-rooms are wainscoted with walnut-wood; it has sash-windows, glazed with crown glass, which make the rooms light and pleasant in all weathers; there are stoves to burn a coal fire, as well as andirons for wood; in the parlour there is a high-backed chair for madam, and a great oaken settle, for my father loved the wooden seat of the North Country, with its cupboard below, in which were kept all kinds of stores; there is a shelf of books if any want to read; there are still-room and dairy; and there is a great cellar well stocked with ale, both small and October—wine, both French, Spanish, and home-made—and whisky, brandy, and Geneva. Outside there is a stately garden full of fruit-trees, and planted with every kind of flower, fruit, and herb; and to screen the house from the cold north and east winds there is a thick plantation, call it rather a small wood or coppice, containing all the trees that afford thick foliage and shelter, as firs and pines

with wych-elm, sycamore, ash, rowan, and so forth. 'Why,' my father would say, looking round him, 'there is no better house in all Northumberland for the entertainment of one's friends; nor, upon my word, doth a pipe of tobacco anywhere taste so well, whether it be on the settle by the fire, or in the garden beneath a tree. Go fetch me one, Dorothy, my girl.' Seeing how much he loved to be at home, it may be thought surprising that he should have endured so long the fatigue of Parliament, the discomforts to a country gentleman of living in London, and the burden of the long journey to town and back again. Yet a gentleman must not shrink from the duties imposed upon him by his position, and when it became necessary for him to become Knight of the Shire, he accepted the office with courage.

I have no cause for repentance as regards the fifth commandment, and am easy in my conscience concerning my duty to my father. The fifth commandment, although it hath been held by some to enjoin submission to all one's superiors in rank, fortune, place, affinity, or age, yet surely was never intended to

include stepmothers. If it was, Heaven forgive the Forsters, for they have greatly sinned. Still, without seeking, like Adam in that pitiful excuse of his, to shift the blame upon another, it is not unjust to say that the beginnings of the quarrels were generally made by madam, who desired to rule her step-children, now growing tall and beyond her control, as if they were still little ones, and her own. My sister Margaret, the eldest, a girl of uncommon spirit, was quite able to hold her own. Perhaps madam was wrong when she charged her with inciting the younger ones to disobedience ; but I am sure that Tom was right when he, grown too big to be beaten, even by his father, stood between madam and his little sister Dorothy, swearing that he would not let madam lay finger upon her, whether she deserved it or not. Let her go beat her own children as much as she pleased.

'Dame,' cried her husband, when madam complained, 'must I for ever be going about with a whip in my hand, like an overseer in a negro plantation ? Do you let the children alone, and they will let you alone.'

Then would she sit glum in a corner till

I went humbly to ask pardon, and all for a time would go well again ; and over a pipe of tobacco and a pot of October, my father would talk with Tom about his horses and his hounds. When my sister Margaret married and went away, the household became more peaceful. Between Tom and myself—I being a child, and he a lad who was always ready to promise anything, besides that he regarded his younger sister with singular affection—it was presently arranged and understood that when we grew up we would live together away from Etherston Hall, and quite apart from madam. The compact was made long before it seemed likely that it would ever be carried out; but then, who knows the decrees of Fate? Nothing, says Mr. Hilyard, according to the French proverb, is more certain than the unforeseen.

'We will live together,' said Tom. 'Cheer up, Dorothy. We will go and live together somewhere as soon as I come of age to do what I please. Then madam will have no one to flout but Jack—poor Jack !'

It is sad to remember the quarrels which occurred daily between these jealous children

and their stepmother. She would rush into my father's presence loud in complaint, scolding like a madwoman, though perhaps it was but a mere trifle, calling loudly for rods and whippings, lamenting the day that ever she came into a house where the children were so disobedient, upbraiding her husband for his lack of severity, and calling on the precepts of Solomon, who is nowhere so clear as on this point of punishing children. (Yet Rehoboam, who was, no doubt, very soundly flogged, did not turn out such a son as the wisest of men and fathers could regard with pride.) On the other side stood Tom with Dorothy; she hanging her head and holding her brother by the hand; he angry, flushed, with fiery eyes, meeting accusation with denial or with charges of his own. When the angry wife flung out of the room, the poor father would turn a perplexed face to his children.

'It is hard,' he would say, 'that a man cannot come home and hang up his wig and find peace without quarrels and fault-findings. Tom, you villain, why anger madam? Dorothy, child, go ask pardon for both, and then sit down and let us be happy.'

Peace was attained presently, when, in a happy day, Mr. Hilyard came to the house. No one, before his arrival, understood how to treat the fancies of a whimsical woman, to humour her prejudices, and to keep her in good temper. Of Mr. Hilyard, more presently. For the moment, sufficient to note that my father soon learned to trust in him for the maintenance of an unclouded sky at home; my stepmother looked to him for such personal services and attentions as were necessary to keep her in good temper; my brother Tom, for such money (to be begged of my father) as he wanted for his personal pleasure; Jack, for mediation in order to save him from punishment; and I myself, for amusement and instruction, combined with the fingering of the spinet, of which I was always fond, and over which I attained, thanks to Mr. Hilyard, a proficiency (I may fairly say) equalled by few. There was never, sure, such a tutor in any family as Mr. Antony Hilyard.

By my mother's side we came from the Bamborough Forsters—a branch of the family more distinguished in the world than the main stock, and remarkable for the gifts of polite-

ness and love of learning. Madam Frances Forster was the elder daughter of Sir William Forster, of Bamborough and Blanchland, by Dorothy Selby, his wife, daughter of Sir William Selby, and granddaughter of Ferdinando, Lord Fairfax. There were nine children of this marriage, viz., William, the eldest, who married his second cousin, Elizabeth Pert Forster, but died in 1698 without issue (she afterwards married Lord Stawell, and enjoyed a charge of £350 a year upon the estate) ; John, the second son, who died unmarried in 1699, aged thirty-one years; Ferdinando, of whom more immediately ; Frances, my mother ; and Dorothy, the youngest, whose birth caused the death of her mother.

This Dorothy, my aunt, grew up a most incomparable beauty, the equal of whom was not to be seen anywhere in the county. In those days, and until the death of Ferdinando, there was open house kept at Bamborough, with so much company and such prodigality and lavishing of good things as no other house in the county could show. It was ever a distinction between the Forsters of Etherston and those of Bamborough, that the former

were quiet gentlemen, lovers of home, and not profuse of expenditure ; while the latter were large-handed, hospitable, and never so happy as when they were spending money with open hands and both hands. True, they had a great estate ; but there is no estate, not even his who owns Potosi or Golconda, but requires care in the spending. Sir William first, and his sons afterwards, lived as freely as if they had an endless revenue. They were not spendthrifts, nor did they throw money away in riotous living, like him who was reduced to feed with the pigs ; but they lived at a great rate : their house was always open for anyone who chose ; their stables were full of horses ; their cellars full of wine ; their rooms full of company ; grooms and varlets in plenty lived upon them ; they even went to London. Madam, I remember, was for ever wondering how the Bamborough people could afford, even with their means, this great expense, and looking forward to a sudden end. But she was one of those women who rejoice to play the part of the Trojan Princess, constantly foretell disaster, concern themselves continually with the affairs of other people, and

are never so well pleased as when they have some fresh misfortune to discuss, or some certain calamity to predict.

To the beautiful Dorothy the coming and going of fresh company meant the arrival and dismissal of so many lovers, for all men fell in love with her at first sight. Those who were too old lamented their youth; those who were married wished they were single for her sake; those who were rich trusted in their acres; those who were poor hoped she would accept their poverty. In a word, they all with one consent began to ask her in marriage before she was seventeen years of age. But she would have none of them; not from pride, nor from a desire to make a great match (because, being a Forster, she knew that she could marry no one better than a plain Northumberland gentleman), but because she was young and happy, contented to wait single for a while, and because of all the lovers there was none who touched her heart.

'My dear,' she said to me once, long afterwards, 'a maid so young is simple, and expects more than she can get; this man is too tall, that man too short, another too fat,

another is boorish, another drinks too much wine, another has a hasty temper—as if she must needs have a man made on purpose for her. The gentlemen pleased me well enough to converse with, though sometimes they were coarse in their talk (a thing which gentlewomen cannot too strongly reprehend) ; but I liked not the prospect of spending my whole life with any one of them all. I desired, in short, more than a plain gentleman can be expected to give. Heaven granted my desire, save for one small particular, which, perhaps, I forgot to pray for, or I might have had that as well. My husband, most admirable in all other respects, had lost, when I married him, what many young women would prize the most—his youth. Yet he hath given me a great place and high rank, with learning and piety even beyond what may be looked for, even in a bishop ; wisdom more than one expects, even in the House of Peers ; and, my dear, unfailing love and consideration for woman's weakness, which is as rare as it is delightful.' And with that her beautiful eyes filled with tears—but not of sorrow.

For there came to Alnwick when she was

staying in their house in that town, being then but just eighteen, the great Bishop of Durham, Lord Crewe, upon a confirmation. Perhaps, but I am not sure, she was herself confirmed by him on that occasion. He was then fifty-six years of age, and, though there is so great a disparity between fifty-six and eighteen, and between a grave bishop and a giddy maiden, his lordship fell in love like any young country squire with Dorothy, and proposed to marry her. To me it seems a truly awful thing to marry a bishop of the English Church, and I am not surprised that Dorothy refused him. Being still in her youth, she was naturally inclined to gaiety, mirth, laughter, dancing, and the company of the young, which is a quite sufficient reason for her refusal, and we need seek no farther. Yet it was a great match, for he was not only Bishop of Durham (that is, a Prince Palatine, with power to appoint his own sheriffs, and almost sovereign in his own diocese), but he was also a great statesman (he had made many enemies in his political career), and, besides this, a peer of the realm by birth and succession, the only member of his sacred pro-

fession who could boast of that distinction.

When his lordship found that his suit did not prevail he went away, and presently married a widow—Penelope, the relict of Sir Hugh Tynte. But when, ten years later, she died, he found that he still remembered the beautiful Dorothy—probably he had never forgotten her—and he again offered her his hand and title.

'Child,' she told me, 'when one arrives at twenty-eight, the pleasures of youth have all been tasted. I had been to London, and seen the glories of the park, the theatre, the gaming-table, and the town of London. Nothing is solid, I had already learned, except the joys of rank, dignity, and wealth. When my lord came to me again, he was, it is true, ten years older—he was sixty-six—yet I assure you that he bore himself still with the uprightness and strength which most men show at forty, having no shadow of ailment or weakness, or touch of infirmity. I was, therefore, sensible of the great honour he proposed to me when he asked me again to become his wife. My dear, that venerable

hand which I presumptuously rejected at eighteen, I accepted with gratitude at eight-and-twenty, and have had no reason since for a single day to regret my decision. Pray Heaven my lord hath continued to regard his marriage with the same feeling of satisfaction!'

Of that, indeed, there could be no doubt, because the Bishop remained to the end an ardent lover.

Such, then, was the family of the Forsters — a goodly trunk, with many vigorous boughs—their original seat at Etherston, with many stately houses and broad lands, belonging to the offshoots and younger branches: a House received with the respect due to an equal by all the great Northumbrian families, one which is numbered among those whose origin mounts to the time of the Conqueror or earlier. Their name is not like that of the Fenwicks or the Swinburnes, of territorial origin, but is, perhaps, a corruption of Forester. They were, Mr. Hilyard says, the family who first seized upon the forest, or they were the King's foresters. In the old times, when they were always fighting, there

was need of as many as could be produced, for the men were mostly doomed to early death fighting on the Border, and the women, more to be pitied, doomed to mourn for husbands, sons, and brothers. So that to both alike fate was unhappy. But that time has passed away. There is peace upon the Marches; and if wicked men stir not up the waters of strife, it is a time for sitting every man by his own fireside, his wig hung upon one peg, and his sword upon another, his helmet placed beside his forefathers' monuments in the church, above the old coat of mail, a pipe of tobacco in his mouth, a brown tankard of October upon the table, with him a friend or two, and talk grave or cheerful, as the time and mood may suggest, while the sun slopes westward, and the shadows lengthen, and the dark crypt of Bamborough Church draweth nearer every hour.

The way in which Tom Forster, junior, of Etherston, became Tom Forster of Bamborough, was as follows:

On August the 22nd, in the year of grace seventeen hundred and one, Mr. Ferdinando Forster, Member of Parliament, the youngest

and only surviving of the three brothers, was entertaining a company of gentlemen to dinner at the Black Horse Tavern in Newcastle. Now, there had been anger (for what reason I know not, and have never heard) for a long time between Mr. Forster and Mr. John Fenwick, of Rock. It has always been maintained Mr. Forster was a gentleman of easy and cheerful disposition, who bore no malice, and was unfriendly to no one ; also that he was ready and willing to come to an amicable settlement of their differences, whatever they might be, hating nothing so much as bad blood, and being ready to forgive private injuries so far as his honour would allow. Unfortunately Mr. Fenwick was of an opposite temperament, being choleric, vindictive, and hot-headed. Also, conceiving that he had been wronged, he went about demanding vengeance, and breathing threats whenever he should meet his adversary. Was it not, therefore, a most unfortunate accident that he should be in Newcastle on that same August morning ? And what should be said of the mischievous wretch (reported to be mad Jack Hall) who informed this angry man that his enemy

was at the Black Horse ? Thither he rushed, maddened by his great wrath, and, bursting into the room where Mr. Forster sat with his friends, did assail him with reproaches, insults, curses, and foul names of so outrageous and intolerable a kind that there was nothing for a man of honour to do but (having first called upon his friends to take notice that the quarrel was forced upon him) to rise and follow the aggressor into the open street. At the White Cross they stood, and both drew their swords. Mr. Hall, who had followed Mr. Fenwick, drew his sword as well, with intent to act as second. Just then, before the weapons had crossed, Mr. Forster's foot slipped, and he fell upon the stones. What followed is dreadful to tell, and shows how rage may make even an honourable gentleman blind and mad. For Mr. Fenwick, without waiting for his adversary to recover, or to be in a position to defend himself, instantly ran him through the heart, so that he fell dead. It has always been said that Mr. Hall should have prevented this cruel murder by striking up Mr. Fenwick's sword with his own, and there are not wanting those who call him as much

a murderer as the unhappy man himself who did the deed. I know not how this may be; but so much is certain, that nothing afterwards ever prospered with Mr. Hall; but he was pursued with continued disaster to the day of his violent and untimely end—a clear mark of Heaven's displeasure. They seized Mr. Fenwick red-handed, so to speak, and lodged him in prison. A month later he was led forth and hanged for the murder—a melancholy and disgraceful end for a gentleman of his birth and fortune.

The intelligence of this terrible crime was brought to Etherston by Mr. Hilyard the next day. He lay at Bamborough that night, and so heard the news among the first. Madam was sitting in the garden with the two boys and Dorothy, Tom being then seventeen and Jack five years younger.

'Alas!' she cried, when she heard the news —the children looking at each other in amazement, not knowing what to say. 'Alas! sure some great wickedness, boys, must have been committed by your mother's family. First it is John, then William, and now Ferdinando; all gone in three years. Of nine children there

remains but one. Some sins, we are assured, are visited upon the third and fourth generation. Tom, it would become thee to repent, lest it be visited upon thee as well.'

'When I find out what I am to repent of,' said Tom sullenly, because he loved not to hear the least reflection upon his mother's family, 'I will repent. My mother's family have brought nothing but honour to us, as far as I know. There is credit in being worth notice. Now, a Lawes might steal a pig and be hanged for it, and his grandchildren never a penny the worse.'

'With submission, madam,' Mr. Hilyard interposed hastily, to prevent further words, 'this crime may lead to your stepson's singular advantage. For, if Mr. Ferdinando hath left no will, I mistake much if the estates do not devolve upon him, or upon him and Lady Crewe together.'

'Will Tom have Bamborough?' madam asked. 'Then he must not have Etherston as well. That,' she added, thinking of her own son, not yet born, 'should be divided among all the other children, however many there may be. The law is unjust as regards the

younger sons. No woman would ever be a second wife did she know how her own children would be served.'

'I doubt not, madam,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'that should the occasion arise, his honour will prove as just and as generous as you would desire.'

'Their father,' madam replied, tossing her head, 'would give all to Dorothy had he his own way. When justice is to be done, Mr. Hilyard, come to me about it.'

'As for me,' cried Tom, the brave lad, his face suddenly flushing, 'it will be my business to avenge the death of my uncle. What! The breath only just out of his body, and we are talking of his succession!'

'Nay,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'as for the murderer, he is in prison; they say that he will be tried for his life. Let me advise you rather to keep this melancholy story before your eyes as an example, never to be forgotten, of the danger of ungoverned wrath, which Lactantius calls a cruel tempest of the mind. Thus, as is recorded, began the madness of Ajax.'

They brought the body of Mr. Forster to

Bamborough, and buried him in the crypt below the chancel. It was observed that no longer procession had ever been known at the funeral of anyone ; nay, it is even said that when the coffin was borne into the church, the tail of the long line of mourners was yet a whole mile away from the porch, and they had to wait till all had reached the church, though all could not find room within, before they began the words of the Funeral Service. The chief mourner was my brother Tom, and after him my father, at the head of so great a gathering of Forsters that you might think them an army in themselves. Then came the county gentlemen and private friends, and lastly the tenants and the common people, who wept tears of unfeigned sorrow, for they had lost a landlord and friend of a kind heart, although one who spent at a great rate and lived beyond his income. The foxhunters gave their brother sportsman the last view-holloa, as one fires a volley over the grave of a soldier ; and the Manor House provided a noble supper for all the mourners, of high and low degree, with as much drink of all kinds as their grief could crave, so that few, indeed,

departed sober from that last tribute of respect to the murdered man.

It was proved to be as Mr. Hilyard thought, —Mr. Forster had made no will. Therefore, the Bamborough estates fell to Lady Crewe and Tom as coheirs, each to take a moiety.

'Dorothy,' Tom cried, 'what we agreed to do shall be done. As soon as I am of age, and can go to live at the Manor House, thou shalt come too, and we will live together.'

CHAPTER III.

THE HEIR OF BAMBOROUGH.

A NOBLE inheritance indeed, even if one only had a moiety or half part! Not only did it include the manors of Bamborough and Blanchland, but also the Rectory and Monastery of Shotley, the Manor of Thornton, with houses at Alnwick and elsewhere, fishing-rights on Tweed and Derwent, and presentations to four livings and chapelries. Tom never wearied of enumerating his lands and possessions.

'As to her ladyship,' he said, 'she may have children and she may not. If she have none, then the whole will be mine. And whatever happens, we shall live in the Manor House, Dorothy, and we will have a noble time—you and I together. She has a dozen palaces and castles; she will surely not

grudge me the simple Manor House of Bamborough.'

But as yet he wanted three years of twenty-one, and for the present he must needs have patience.

Presently, little by little, there began to leak out reports that all was not as it should be with the estate. For first we heard of a charge of £350 a year in favour of my uncle Will's widow—a monstrous and most greedy jointure, truly, when one considers that on many estates as large as that of Bamborough a poor £40 a year is all that a younger son or daughter may look for. Next we heard of a rent-charge of £500 a year created by the late Sir William Forster to pay for some of his profuse expenditure. This was bought up by Lord Crewe, no doubt at her ladyship's expressed desire, for £10,000. But the Bishop was one of the most wealthy men in the kingdom, and could well afford even so great a sum. Here, however, was a goodly cantle cut out of the estate. Half the annual rent gone at once. Tom, for his part, showed little or no concern about it.

'There remains,' he said, 'another £800 a

year, besides the houses. There is a good deal to be done with the half of £800 a year. And I am the heir of Etherston as well.'

He looked on his heritage of Bamborough as a means for living as he wished until the Etherston property fell in.

Yet he ought to have felt that there is a sad falling-off from the £1,600 or so of revenue received by Sir William, to the enjoyment of only a moiety of £800 a year. There were other creditors and claims upon the estate also, of which we knew nothing, and happily, as yet, suspected nothing.

The heir of both Bamborough and Etherston was a much more important person than the heir of Etherston alone. Lady Crewe, who, to speak the truth, took little notice of her sister's children while her brothers were living, now showed a very particular interest in Tom, and wrote many letters upon his course of life, both to him and to his father. She begged earnestly that he might go to Cambridge, pointing out that, although her nephew's inclination lay not much, as she understood, in the direction of books, it would be well for him to make the acquaintance at

that ancient seat of learning of the young men, his contemporaries, and to learn how matters of importance are regarded outside Northumberland. Tom, therefore, went to St. John's College, as a gentleman commoner, with Mr. Hilyard for his tutor. Here, however, he remained but three or four terms. Then her ladyship pointed out that a country gentleman has to become a magistrate, so that it is most desirable for him to know law, and entreated him to enter at Lincoln's Inn, and to reside in London for a part of each year, in order to study the Acts of Parliament and the powers of a justice of the peace. To this, however, Tom objected, saying that his father and his grandfather had been justices without going to Lincoln's Inn, or knowing any law at all, and that, to his mind, a gentleman should not dirty his fingers with the quibbles and shifts of lawyers. In this opinion he continued, although he was reminded that one of his cousins had been Sir Thomas Forster, Justice of Common Pleas under King James I., and another, Sir Robert Forster, no less than Lord Chief Justice of England under Charles I. Then Lady Crewe wrote another

letter, in which she clearly told her nephew that his rusticity and that of his friends was such as to unfit him for the posts of distinction open to the owner of Bamborough (her brothers, indeed, especially Ferdinando, had been gentlemen of courtly and finished manners, acquired among the most polite society of St. James's): and that if he would neither study law nor letters, it behoved him, under proper tutelage, such as that of Mr. Hilyard, to travel into Italy, and so to acquire the manners of the great world. I knew not at the time, and none of us were courtiers enough to discern, that her ladyship, in taking all this trouble, was endeavouring to make Tom understand her design; namely, to make her nephew the successor of her brothers, and no loser by their prodigality, provided only he would show himself worthy of her bounty.

This project she never abandoned, being always most jealous for the honour of the Forsters, although the events which followed prevented her from carrying it into effect. Yet Tom was so foolish as to fall into a great rage upon receiving her letter, alleging that, as for his manners, he was not ashamed of

them, and they were those of his father and his friends; that he was not, for his part, going to become a London beau; and as to travelling in foreign parts, to be sure the Prince was in France, but what had an English gentleman to learn from a set of mangy French and scurvy Italians? And as for distinction and the holding of high posts, he might show her ladyship some day that he was as capable of distinguishing himself as any man in Northumberland—rusticity or no rusticity.

'Thou wilt not be guided by the wisest of women, boy,' my father said. 'She is the wisest of women, because she is led by the most crafty and the wisest of men. Thou wilt neither to London nor to foreign lands, though here is Mr. Hilyard longing to go with thee. Well, stay-at-homes have little wit; ignorance breeds conceit. I have myself been to London and seen the Court; but as for thee, Tom, thou art pure rustic. Besides, though I am a simple and unlearned person, content to stay at home, they will not, I fear, suffer thee the same liberty. For thou hast more to lose; and where the carcase is, thither the eagles gather.'

Then Lady Crewe privately exhorted Mr. Forster to take care lest his son, through ignorance of the world, should be tempted into some rash enterprise, like that of Sir William Fenwick, who was executed for treason in the year 1696; to remember that fierce spirits were always abroad, endeavouring to stir up immature risings and to hatch foolish plots for the destruction of unhappy gentlemen; and to be assured that though her own favour and that of her husband would be continued to her nephew should he move prudently, that favour would certainly be withdrawn should rashness plunge him into difficulties with the Government: with much more to the same effect.

'Her ladyship is right,' cried my father. 'None so hot for the Sovereign as my Lord Bishop till King William comes to the throne. Then he must needs run for it and try the air of France. Running is a very noble exercise when you are young. My lord is out of favour now, and he is getting old, and would fain stay where he is, and I think he would like to taste once more the sweetness of Court smiles; but still, one who

loves the old House. This should be thy safest plan, Tom. Be guided by the Bishop. He will never go over to the other side, and yet he will never put his neck in the noose. Wherefore, my son, remember that conspiracies are hatched by men who have got nothing to lose; it is easy for a landless Irishman to talk wild and vapour, but for us, who have a name and an estate which we have held together for seven hundred years and more, the risk is too great. I do not say, neither, that we are to turn Whigs. We who fought for the Stuarts stand by them still. They made my grandfather Sheriff and Knight; they gave Sir Claudius the Manor of Bamborough; saving our religion, and our estates, Tom—and our estates, boy, mind that—we must follow the Stuarts always. When the voice of the country is clearly for the Prince, the Forsters will come with the rest. But when thwacks are going, let those who began get the first of the hammering, while we stand by and see which way the battle is likely to go. Therefore, when thou art of age, Tom, take care to write nothing, to promise nothing, to sign nothing. As for what may happen, we know

nought. The Dutchman hath no children: let us wait; the Princess Anne may follow, but we know not. Let us wait, and meantime lie snug all.'

However, there were two years to wait before the coming of age, which was in the year 1702. By consent of Lady Crewe, Tom was allowed during this time to use the Manor House as if it was already his own, and many were the days which we spent in the old place, sometimes with Mr. Hilyard for tutor and companion, spending whole weeks there. The house was not larger than Etherston Hall, but it was, in a way, more splendid. There were portraits on the walls of Sir Claudius, Claudius his nephew, Sir William, his three sons, the wife of the eldest, my own mother, and my aunt, the beautiful Dorothy. Truly there never was a more lovely and charming face than that of this portrait, the original of which I had never seen. It represented her at the age of twenty or twenty-one. She had a face round rather than oval; a sweet, rounded, dimpled chin; a mouth more like a rosebud than the lips of a woman; light brown, curling hair, lying in

a cluster about her forehead, which, Mr. Hilyard said, was too ample for the Greek idea of beauty, their Venus being low of forehead ; the nose was full ; the eyes were dark brown, and of a singular brightness. I reflected with inexpressible joy, when looking upon this sweet face, that my own eyes were of the same colour and brightness, and my own hair of the same hue, and the same tendency to twist and curl itself about my forehead. When gentlemen, past the age of thirty or so, came to the Manor House, they gazed at the portrait and sighed, remembering her beauty, and thinking, no doubt, how great a thing it would have been to marry so lovely a woman. When the young men came, they looked upon the portrait with such wonder as they might experience in looking upon that of Helen, Cleopatra, or fair Dido.

'She moves,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'a goddess confessed. Never, since those fair women of old, has there been her like. Sometimes I think that the incomparable Sappho may have had those eyes, which are yours also, Miss Dorothy ; and the chaste Lucretia that look, in which you yourself greatly resemble your

aunt; and even Venus herself that dimpled chin, which I am glad to see remains still in the family.'

There were other portraits, but these were the best.

The house itself is of two stories, and is built in the modern fashion, having square sash windows, two on one side the door and one on the other. It looks from the front upon a triangular green, planted with a clump of trees, having the village pant at the end, and a field at the base. On the right is the church, and on the left is the broad street leading to the castle. At the back is a garden, not so big or so well provided as that of Etherston, because, by the seaside, everything will not grow; but it has a great store of herbs and fruit trees, with currants, gooseberries, and strawberries in season, lavender and other plants for strong waters and perfumes, and herbs for medicine: notwithstanding which, Nature hath been so benevolent as to plant things for suffering man's solace in every hedge, so that, though there may be plenty of toothache in the world, there is also plenty of trefoil, yarrow, and groundsel-root; and, though one

may catch a cough, there is no fear of using up all the ground-ivy; and, though men will cut themselves with knives and sickles, their wives can gather for nothing as much comfrey, self-heal, and valerian as will cure their wounds.

A goodly garden and ancient, with a trim lawn as well, on which bowls could be played; and a sundial, which had marked the flight of time for many hundreds of years; and a fountain, which was stopped, and would work no longer till Mr. Hilyard set it agoing; and then we marvelled how we could have found the garden perfect without the pleasant plash of that jet of water with its little arch like a rainbow, and its sparkle in the sun. In every season—summer, winter, or autumn—it was pleasant to walk in the garden, and to look over the low wall at the end, and the green meadow beyond it, upon the broad sea which stretches away till sea and sky meet. A stormy sea it is when the north-east winds blow, and many have been the wrecks upon the rocks and islets off the shore.

To live in the Manor House was in itself a help to cure our rustic ways of thought and

speech. For not only were there portraits, but also pictures brought from abroad, pictures of Roman Catholic saints — there was a martyr, I remember, set up as a target for the arrows of his persecutors; and others of hunting-parties, and of battles by sea and land. Mr. Hilyard would stand before these pictures and discourse with great learning to me upon the Italian, Spanish, French, and Dutch Schools, and the chief merits of each. There was also tapestry, but not much. Mr. Hilyard has told me of the famous tapestry which he has seen in the Palace of St. James. There was a cabinet full of curiosities brought home by travellers in foreign parts—among them a stone picked up in the Garden of Gethsemane, and a garland of thorns bought in Jerusalem itself. This cabinet afforded Mr. Hilyard the opportunity of many a discourse. There were also books—not one shelf only, as we had at Etherston—but three or even four shelves. There was Baker's 'Chronicle,' Holinshed's 'History,' Sibbes's 'Soul's Conflict,' a volume of Jeremy Taylor, Camden's 'Britannia,' Grey's 'Choregraphia,' a 'History of the Lives, Travels, and Sufferings of the Apostles,'

with pictures, very moving ; Record's 'Arithmetic,' the 'Marrow of Mathematics,' Hartmann's 'True Preserver of Health,' Drake's 'World Encompassed,' Evelyn's 'Gardener's Almanack,' the 'Paradise Lost' of Milton, the Plays of Shakespeare, Bacon's 'Essays,' Quarles's 'Emblems,' Butler's 'Hudibras,' in which Mr. Hilyard greatly delighted—I know not why, because I could never read it with pleasure—and a great many more. I read in most of these books, and, I hope, sucked as much profit from them as was to be expected of a girl. To be sure, I had beside me always a most patient, learned, and kind commentator, who spared no pains to make me understand obscure passages, and to illustrate places which, before he spoke of them, seemed unintelligible. An ignorant reader is like a poor man with empty purse, who walks along a valley strewn with diamonds and precious stones, which he neglects because he knows not how priceless are the stones beneath his feet. Pity it was that Tom would neither read nor listen.

On Sundays, when we all went to church in the morning, there was a great and note-

worthy difference after Tom became the half owner of Bamborough. For, as often happens in old churches, this of ours was divided and parcelled out among the gentry. The north transept belongs to the Greys of Howick; the south transept to the Radcliffes, although they are Papists; the north part of the nave belongs to the owners of the Lucker, the south to the Forsters of Etherston, and the chancel to the Forsters of Bamborough. While, therefore, my father, with madam and Jack and the children, sat in their pew below the pulpit, Tom, and I with him, and Mr. Hilyard, because he was the tutor, walked proudly into the chancel and sat in a great pew raised three feet above the ground, so that you mounted by steps. The seats were lined with red velvet, very worn. Above us hung our own scutcheon, showing the Radcliffe *fleur-de-lys* among the Etherston martlets; on the other side was the great marble monument of Sir Claudius, who died at Blanchland; and, hanging on the wall, the helmet and iron coat of some other Forster long since dead and gone. Beside us was the stone effigy, with crossed legs, called Sir

Lancelot du Lac, concerning whom Mr. Hilyard had a great deal to say, as to whether he was not perchance a Forster, and thus misnamed from the tradition of some great exploit or deed of arms.

It is an old and crumbling chancel. Among other things it contains an ancient window, through which the unhappy lepers outside might formerly see the elevation of the Host within. Separating chancel from nave, was an open screen of carved white stone, a good deal broken. When we stood up for the reading of the Psalms and the singing of the hymn, I could see through this screen the back of the vicar at the reading-desk, and in the pew below the pulpit my father's best Sunday wig in the crispest curl, and madam's hat and ribbons. Beyond the pews of the gentlefolk were the seats of the common people, worn black and shiny by generations of the humble worshippers. I suppose that in heaven there are no velvet-lined pews, with steps to mount, and stoves to keep one warm in winter; but it seems fitting thus to separate gentle and simple, and doubtless even in heaven there are degrees—one cannot under-

stand that a prince and a scullion will ever sit side by side. As for me, I confess that it was with pride that I sat every Sunday beside Tom in the chancel, reflecting that, although my father was the head of the older stock, the noblest and best of the family came from Sir John, the great Warden of the March, and Governor of Bamborough Castle—the most splendid possession of his grandchildren.

There was never a day, when I was at the Manor House, but I passed some of it within the old walls, clambering, exploring, and running from one broken chamber to another, until I knew every chamber and every vault in the great pile. When I climbed the broken stairs and stood upon the giddy top of the half-roofed keep, I used to look around me with such pride as a Percy should feel at Alnwick or at Arundel. I was prouder even than my brother of the stately place, though he never wearied of rehearsing the greatness of his folk. A noble castle, indeed! This is none other than the Castle of King Ida, called the Royal House. King Edwin lived here; miracles were worked here by saints for the preservation of the castle; William Rufus sat

down before it; David Bruce was a prisoner in it; the breaches in the broken walls were caused by the cannon of the Yorkists. Why, whenever I read the history of England in Holinshed or Baker, I turned over the pages and looked out the places where the castle is mentioned, and then my foolish heart would glow with pride. But surely there could be no more delightful place for a young girl's playground and place of meditation. The keep alone remains entire, out of all the towers, bastions, forts, and strong places which once stood here; but their ruins still stand. In some places there are broken stone steps leading up to chambers whose floors are gone, windows gaping wide, and roof long since torn off; in others there are deep dungeons, open now to the light of heaven. At night, I used to think the groans of dead prisoners still ascend to the sky. From the top of the keep one may look out to sea and behold the Farnes lying beneath one as on a map; to the north is Holy Island, with its ruined church and castle on a hill; to the south is black Dunstanburgh, where the Seeker may be seen nightly by those who look

for him ; and inland lie the fields and woods belonging to the Forsters. In early summer the rock on which the castle stands, black and terrible in the winter, is covered, wherever the least ruggedness affords space for a morsel of earth, with tufts of grass and flowers. There are the thrift, the bell campion, and the trefoil, crimson, white and blue, very pretty to look upon. Later on, the sandhills, about which the rabbits keep running all the year round in thousands, are covered with flowers of other kinds, the names of which I knew and their properties, thanks to Nurse Judith and Mr. Hilyard.

Often Mr. Hilyard came here with me, telling out of his vast knowledge stories of the days when this place, now so silent and ruinous, was filled with knights and valiant men-at-arms, when the courts resounded with the hoofs of horses, the voices of the soldiers, and the clank of iron heel. He could restore the castle as it used to be, and would mark out for me the inner bailly, the outer bailly, the portcullis, the postern, the outworks, the chapel, the stables, the kitchens, and all, until in imagination I knew the castle, as it was

when the Percies were its governors. No others came to the old castle except myself and Mr. Hilyard ; it was quite lonely and deserted. In stormy weather the waves leaped up to the very walls, while the gulls flew screaming and the wind whistled. In the evening, when the twilight fell, I would sit among the fallen stones, seeing in the shadows of the pile grim spirits of the dead, and hearing in the breeze the voices of departed saints, kings, knights, bishops, sad prisoners, brave men, and fair ladies, whose ancient joys and sufferings made this place as sacred as the churchyard.

As for Tom, he cared little about the antiquity of the castle or its past history ; his chief desire being for the time to arrive when he could call the place his own and be out of tutelage, and his principal occupation being hunting of fox and of otter, riding, shooting, fishing, badger-drawing, bat-fowling, netting of partridges with the lanthorn, setting decoys for ducks, hawking on the seashore, stalking the wild bulls of Chillingham, cock-fighting, dog-fighting, with the other manly sports in which young men delight. He conversed

much with grooms, keepers, feeders, and falconers, and was experienced in every kind of sport. He also took great pleasure, in those days, in the wild-fowl shooting on the islands ; many a time he has taken me with him when he had no other companion (Mr. Hilyard's stomach being unable to stand the motion of a boat). Then we would sail through the waves to those wild and desolate rocks covered with the nests of the sea-birds which rise screaming from under the feet of the rare visitor. The cries of the birds, the whirr of their wings, the whistling of the wind, the dashing of the waves, are the only sounds upon these lonely islands where St. Cuthbert built his hermitage. They are, indeed, a truly fitting place for the gloomy recluse, who (though doubtless a holy man) dared to call the half of the Lord's creatures unclean, and forbade a woman even to set her foot upon the place where he resided. Many pious women have gone into voluntary retreat and hermitage, but one never yet, I believe, heard of a woman thus speaking of man as to call him unholy or unclean. The walls of St. Cuthbert's house yet stand in ruins on his

deserted island, but there are now no human beings within their shelter.

I learned to know all the birds by their flight, their cry, and their feathers—the St. Cuthbert's ducks who make nests of the sea-weed, the tomnoddies, the skouts, the guillemots, the shags, the kittiwakes, the gulls, the brockits, the rock-pigeons, the sea-larks, and the jackdaws who build in the rabbit-holes. In those days, who so brave and handsome as young Tom Forster, leaping lightly from rock to rock, fowling-piece in hand, his long hair tied in a ribbon, and blown behind him by the sea-breezes, his grey eyes bright, and his cheek ruddy? What but a splendid future could await a lad so gallant? As for the girl who ran beside him, as agile as her brother, dressed in short petticoats and thick shoes with woollen stockings, she was a slip of a thing then, with dark brown eyes (like those of her aunt), and long fair curls flying under her hat. Her brother, though he sometimes swore at his grooms and thrashed the stable-boys, never had a harsh or unkind word for her, nor she any thought for him but of tender and true

affection. Pity it was that one of natural abilities so good would never read and acquire wisdom.

'The man who reads not,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'may get skill and knowledge, but scarcely wisdom. The hind and herd are men of great skill and knowledge, the one in ploughing, sowing, and reaping, the other in cattle and the creatures of field and forest. So the old wife in the village learns the virtues of all the herbs that grow, and the sportsman learns the ways of the creatures whom he hunts. But without books one knoweth not his brother man, nor his own position and importance, nor the proportion which one thing beareth to another; as, for instance, the opinion of a Northumberland gentleman compared with the opinions of the City of London, or that of Will's Coffee House. Thus the man of no books may easily consider his own importance to be much greater than it is in the eyes of others, and his own doctrines infallible, and his own way of thinking the only way possible for honest men. Especially there is the danger of overestimating his importance. It was the ignorance as well as the ambition of the thief

Diophon which caused him to burst and die with envy because, on his way to be hanged, he found that one of his fellows was to be treated to a gallows higher than his own.'

I understood Mr. Hilyard to be talking of my brother Tom and his companions, wherefore I resented the likening of Tom unto the rogue Diophon, even though he was an ancient Greek ; and he hastened to assure me that the comparison was not as to honesty but as to ignorance, which if it lead to self-conceit even in so base a person as a common thief, may much more do so in the case of a country gentleman of Northumberland.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS HIGHNESS THE PRINCE.

As regards politics, I declare that I know nothing at all of what went on in London or anywhere else; but, as for Northumberland, I can safely assert that I have never known a time when there were not, continually, whisperings in corners, mysterious communications, breathless suspense, a coming and going of strangers or of gentlemen whom I knew to be in some way connected with the cause of the Prince. There were always great things going to happen, if we were to believe the people who made it their business to keep up a racket through the country in order to sustain and stimulate the loyalty of the party. His Highness was about to embark; a great many thousand French soldiers were collecting for him; everything was ready; the country

was strong for the Prince. According to these gentry, there never was any doubt at all about the voice of the country. Why, when after many years I journeyed to London, I was amazed to think of our own ignorance in believing all these statements. I do Mr. Hilyard the justice of saying that he never did believe them. He was, I know, a Whig by birth; but, like a good servant, he became a Jacobite because we, in whose service he was, were of that cause. What did London think? That was ever his cry. Not London of the coffee-houses and St. James's Street, but London of the City. Why, how strong and resolute must be the Protestant party of this present day, seeing that it has been strong enough to stomach a King who knew no word of English, so resolute as to keep him with his ill manners, his ugly mistresses, and his German Court, rather than have a Papist, even with all the Christian graces—though of these unfortunately the Prince hath few, which one says with shame. This was not understood in the north; many friends of the Protestant gentry were Catholics; they were English, however, first, and Catholics

next; not servants of the Pope first, and English next.

'Why,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'these are not the Papists we in the south have been taught to fear. Their priests are courteous gentlemen of good English families; they show no wish to roast us at the stake; they are all for toleration. I doubt whether if London knew Northumberland, the country would any longer fear a Catholic King. I hear there are some in Scotland who believe that the King would be converted by his coronation, which I doubt. But his advisers, if they were English priests, not foreigners, would surely do the country little harm.'

Mr. Hilyard always put London before any other part of England: doubtless with reason, as being the centre of all. And he acknowledged that the people of England will never forget the blood and fire of Queen Mary, nor will they cease to ask what security there is that another Papist Sovereign will not surround himself with other Bonners and Gardiners. Listening daily to the talk, I conceived a plan by which everything might be set right. Like all children's plans, it was

impossible: for it was nothing less than that the Prince should imitate the example of Henry IV. of France, and for his crown change his faith. This, in my eyes, was all the easier, from the circumstance that, while Henry left the right for the wrong, our King would leave the wrong for the right. Wrong or right, it must have been choking to King James to hear, when he went to live in Rome —even in Rome, where he might look for applause and support, if anywhere—to hear, I say, as he is said to have heard, a Cardinal—one of the Holy College—whisper to another, with scorn unworthy of his sacred profession and dignity, 'Behold the King who threw away three crowns—for a mass!'

There were busybodies who went up and down the country in these days whispering, reporting, conveying letters, drawing up lists, with a mighty fuss and pretence of secrecy. Some of them were disguised; some sent letters by the hands of countrymen, and even gipsies, on whom they could depend; some were Irish, who are ever ready to embark in any mad scheme; some were country gentlemen or younger sons; some, even, were High

Church clergy ; some were Roman Catholic priests of the intriguing kind, who dressed as laymen—by dispensation, one may suppose. As for the sum of these whisperings, it was always the same. The country was ripe ; at a word, at the signal, the rising would be general ; the Prince was always ready. A brave captain, too, who had shown his valour at Oudenarde and Malplaquet (where, indeed, he was fighting against his own countrymen) ; one who was eager to lead his brave followers to victory, and to reward them generously with the spoil of the Whigs. These things were industriously spread abroad among the Jacobite gentry, especially of Lancashire and Northumberland ; it was firmly believed that the party was irresistible. And if the gentlefolk believed this, how much more the common people and the ignorant Scotch, who ran after their chieftains to their own destruction ? Yet the events of the year 1707 ought to have opened the eyes of the party when they saw a French fleet, well manned, well found, well armed, with six thousand soldiers on board, fly ignominiously at the mere appearance of Admiral Byng and

his ships. The Prince was on board the French commander's ship. He prayed to be landed on the coast of Scotland—no one, whatever side he may have taken, can doubt the gallantry of His Highness in those days—but the prayer was refused, so that he returned to France, and presently, notwithstanding the French King's solemn engagements, was driven out of that country into the Papal Dominions. These things prove the value of the Grand Monarque's word, and also that the English will not have a King forced upon them by French bayonets.

'We wait our time,' Tom said. 'When that time comes, the unanimous rising of the country gentlemen will be accepted as the voice of the people.'

'Happy the man,' said Mr. Hilyard, stroking his chin, 'who rises the last.'

'What? And leave others the glory and the honours?'

He was still a lad under age, but in this way he talked; he and his companions.

'It will be the Protestant gentry,' he said grandly, 'though we shall allow the Catholics to join us, who will restore His Sacred

Majesty. Then we shall find for him, perhaps out of Northumberland, counsellors wise enough to assure the country's safety.'

These were our dreams. Fatal dreams they were, which in the end destroyed so many.

But always, in all these talks, the gentlemen spoke of the young Lord Derwentwater and his return. He would lead the Catholics of the whole country. He was a man of whose opinions, though no one had yet seen him and he was but a boy, there could be no doubt; his loyalty was beyond all possible question, he was rich, he was young and ardent, he was reported to be possessed of every virtue. I heard so much talk of this young gentleman that he became in my imagination a person more important even than the Prince, concerning whom elder ladies already whispered and shook their heads. Besides, His Royal Highness stood too far away for a girl to think much about him. The kings of the earth are like the gods of the ancients—one does not picture them except on coins and in statues. But as for Lord Derwentwater, who would certainly

some day return to his own people, he must be as beautiful as David, as noble as Arthur, as splendid as Adonis, and as valiant as Orlando, or any of the Seven Champions. He was to one young damsel, and doubtless to many others, the Prince of the old wife's story. There are many such stories, but only one Prince for all of them. He is young and handsome, so was Lord Derwentwater; he hath a noble and flourishing estate, so had my lord; he hath a generous heart and a lavish hand, so had the young Earl; he is unmarried and free to become a lover—a thing which always pleases a girl, though she need not be so foolish as to think him likely to become her own lover—thus was my lord. To these qualities add that he had been the youthful friend, the companion, the sharer of the studies, even the cousin of that young Prince, now our lawful King, the rightful Sovereign of Great Britain and Ireland, acknowledged by most of the subjects (that is to say by all honest men) in these islands. He would tell the simple country folks when he came home of the appearance and countenance of His Royal Highness; he

would come as a messenger, or an ambassador —say rather a Lieutenant-Governor—to the North Country, to keep their loyalty alive.

The origin of the Radcliffes is so remote as to be unknown. Many of our northern gentry boast a descent from the Norman Conquerors. They, however, were nobles in still earlier times. It was not till two hundred years ago, or thereabouts, that a Radcliffe first came from Cumberland to the neighbouring county, when Sir William married the heiress of Dilston. The first Earl, Sir Francis, was created on the marriage of his eldest son Edward, in the year 1686, with Lady Mary Tudor, daughter of Charles II. It was an unhappy marriage, but as to the reasons of the unhappiness, one need not inquire. It becomes not a mere private gentlewoman to pass judgment on the actions of Earls and Countesses; yet it must not be forgotten that the Countess, within two years of the Earl's death, married two more husbands in succession.

After the separation the Earl remained in London, in no way furthering (so far as I have learned) the cause of his rightful

Sovereign. The Countess, however, took her four children to St. Germain's, where she brought them up in the Court, and among the personal friends, of the Prince. It was feared by some that their French training would have made them become Frenchmen in habits and in mind. This was not so, however, for it may be averred that there never were three young men who more ardently desired the greatness of their country, and more loved liberty and Constitutional Government, than these three.

We were kept regularly informed of the Earl's movements and those of his brothers by the kindness of Sir William and Lady Swinburne, of Capheaton, who received and sent letters from London, Newcastle, and even St. Germain's. They were from the Earl himself, Sir William's cousin, from the Countess, and from Colonel Thomas Radcliffe, who chiefly lived in Newcastle. Sir William Swinburne's father married the first Earl's half-sister, and the union was blessed by the birth of four-and-twenty children. Considering that the first Earl of Derwentwater had eight daughters and four sons, while his father

had six sons and seven daughters, all by his wife Isabel, daughter of Sir Ralph Grey, of Chillingham, there were plenty in the north who could call the young Lord Derwentwater cousin.

We learned, therefore, from their letters, year by year, how the Earl and his brothers were in the hands of tutors, and were already showing great promise; how they were pages to the Prince; that it was decided not to let them carry arms in the French King's service; that they would come to England as soon as the Earl was of age, and so on, the news always keeping up our curiosity about this young nobleman.

To pass over several years, we learned, in course of time, that his lordship was now fully grown; that he was a comely, well-proportioned, and handsome young man, accomplished in all manly exercises, fond of reading, and well instructed, acquainted with the names and pedigrees of the Northumberland families, who were all his cousins; and that he was coming home to England without delay. Then the intriguers sent word of this, as of a most important event, about the

country; the messengers rode north and south with letters; there was a stir in the north, and it was felt that now the time would shortly arrive for something to be done.

'But,' said Tom, 'we Protestants may not be led by a Catholic. My lord must be content with being second.'

CHAPTER V.

MR. ANTONY HILYARD.

When Mr. Antony Hilyard first came to us, as tutor to my brothers, he was a young man of twenty-one or twenty-two, not long from Oxford. He brought with him letters recommendatory, in which his learning was highly approved, and was sent to us by Mr. Ferdinando Forster, who heard of him as a young man desirous of entering a gentleman's family as tutor, in the hope of becoming chaplain, and perhaps rising in the Church. Although a young man of great accomplishments and vast knowledge, he left his University without obtaining a degree, which was strange if anyone had thought of inquiring into the cause; as for so learned a scholar coming to take a tutor's place in a gentleman's house, that was nothing, because he was only the son of a

vintner, and born in a place called Barbican, London. Such a place of honourable service, especially when the master is so easy a gentleman as my father, is one which all young men of his birth and parts should desire, though some, as Mr. Hilyard hath himself often told me, go to London, and there court Fortune as poets, playwrights, translators, writers of vamped-up travels, compilers of sermons for such of the clergy as lack the ability to compose them, and such work, which is, I am informed, as poorly paid as it is miserable, and beneath the consideration of a man who values his own dignity. Mr. Hilyard could write and speak both the French and Italian tongues; he was, besides, familiar with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldæan; he was skilled in many branches of the mathematics; he could play on the spinet with great ease and dexterity; he was an excellent geographer, and could discourse for hours upon a *mappa mundi*, or chart of the world; he could tell the stars and their courses; he could converse with intelligence and to the edification of his hearers on almost any subject, being equally at home in Peru and in London; knowing the

Hottentots and Japanese as well as the London Scourers ; and even in matters connected with agriculture or housewifery he could talk learnedly, being familiar with the practice of the ancient Romans both in their houses and on their farms. In a word, no knowledge came amiss to him ; he despised nothing ; when he took his walks abroad he was always noting something, whether the call of a bird or the habits of a weasel, a wild flower or herb of the field ; he would ask a gardener about his fruit, a shepherd about his sheep, a ploughman about the soil, a dairymaid about her cows. And what he learned he never forgot. I do not exhaust his accomplishments when I add that he was skilled in the art of fencing, and that here he found Tom an excellent pupil.

It was impossible for any young man to be more grave, and even solemn, in his bearing and conversation; when Mr. Forster invited him to drink with his friends, which he sometimes did, he was seldom greatly overcome with liquor, and even at his worst preserved his gravity ; he displayed none of the disposition to levity, gallantry, profane talk, and

impious scoffing which is manifested by so many young men of the present day; no woman's reputation suffered by any act or word of his; no bishop could have been more blameless in his daily life.

It shows the strength of youthful impressions that, although I know so much better, I can never now think upon virtue without there instantly appearing before my eyes the short squab figure of Mr. Hilyard. He wears a brown coat, and he has no ruffles to his shirt; his face is round; his nose broad, and a little upturned; his lips are full and mobile; his eyes are large; it is neither the figure nor the face of a grave and learned person, yet was he both grave and learned. Socrates, I have heard, was remarkable for a face of great plainness, and yet was a very learned philosopher. Nor was it a face which one would expect to find in a man of so religious and severe a turn as Mr. Hilyard. He always went to church first, so to speak, and came out of it last; his discourse was full of examples gathered from ancient sources, and learned authors recommending the practice of good works.

Conduct so blameless, gravity so singular, wisdom so remarkable, never before seen in a man so young, could not fail to command, before long, the confidence of all. Mr. Forster entrusted his most private affairs to the counsel of Mr. Hilyard; madam carried her complaints to him as to one who would find redress; his pupil, who loved not books, obeyed him, was shamed out of his rusticity, and was kept by him from those follies by which young gentlemen in the country too often suffer in reputation and imperil their souls. As for myself, he took from the earliest the kindest interest in my welfare, and taught me many things which I should never have learned but for him, especially to read and talk the French tongue, and to play on the spinet. Lady Crewe condescended to write to him concerning her nephew, and the Bishop sent him instructions as to the authors which Tom should be made to read. Tom did not read them, but he sometimes listened while Mr. Hilyard read them aloud, and in this manner, no doubt, he arrived at some knowledge of their contents.

This preamble makes what follows the more

astonishing. One evening—it was in August, and a few weeks before Tom came of age—while I was walking in the garden of the Manor House, the sun being already set, Tom came running and calling me:

'Come, sister!' he cried; 'come, Doll, quick! There is something worth looking at, I assure you.'

He took my hand, and we ran into the village street, which was generally quiet enough at this time, but this evening there was a great noise of singing and laughing, and the playing of a fiddle. It came from the inn.

'There is the rarest sport,' said Tom. 'A company of players are at the inn, on their way from Alnwick to Berwick. Who do you think is with them? Mr. Hilyard!'

'Mr. Hilyard with the players?'

'No other. Ho! ho! Laughing and drinking and playing. Yes; you may open your eyes, Dolly, but there it is. No other than Mr. Hilyard! You never saw the like! Now, see; if he knows we are watching him he will stop. We can go to the back of the house, and in at the kitchen-

door. Hush! Follow me, and don't speak or laugh.'

We went on tiptoe into the kitchen of the inn, where the landlady was sitting. She held up her finger, screwed her mouth, nodded her head, and laughed, indicating by these gestures that something out of the common was going forward. She then gently opened the door which led into the best room—not that where the rustics sit on wooden settles and push the pot around, but that which is furnished with tables and chairs, used by gentlemen and the better sort. The company consisted of about a dozen—men and women, of various ages. They were not gentlefolk, yet they had an air very different from that of the country people. They were poorly dressed, yet had odds and ends of finery, one of the men wearing a scarlet coat and laced hat, planted sideways on his great wig, and cocked like an officer; another with tattered lace ruffles; a third with a ragged coat of drugget, and yet a fine flowered waistcoat. As for the women, there were five, of whom one was old, two others middle-aged, two young. One of the last was pretty, after a bold and impudent

fashion, having great eyes, which she rolled about, and large, comely arms. She was dressed very finely, as if she was about to mount the stage, with a silk petticoat and satin frock looped up, and she wore a low commode upon her head. A bright fire was burning, though the night was not cold; a pair of candles were lighted; on the table, which was pushed into a corner, stood a bowl of steaming hot punch; and on the floor, prancing about by himself, with a thousand tricks of face and twistings of his body, was—oh! wonder of wonders, and who could have believed it?—no other than Mr. Antony Hilyard.

'See him!' whispered Tom. 'Oh the pious and religious man!'

Indeed, I hardly recognised him, so changed he was. Why, he had given, somehow, a martial air to his wig; his face was twice as long as usual; his eye was stern; he wore the air of a commander-in-chief; he carried his left hand upon his hip, as one who is a marshal or prince at the head of his army. And he was at least six inches taller. How a man can change at will his face, his stature,

and his appearance passeth my understanding. (*Nota bene.*—The girl, Jenny Lee, was sitting in the corner of the room with her great black eyes wide open and her mouth agape; but of her I thought nothing, so stupefied was I with the transformation of Mr. Hilyard.)

He beckoned to the actress who wore the silk petticoat, and she laughed, sprang to her feet, and—can such things be possible?—became all in a moment changed, and was at once a great lady—a princess or countess, at least. Why—a moment before she was a common stroller of the company—and now——

'Pretty Bracegirdle herself—the fair, the chaste Celinda — could not look the part better,' said Mr. Hilyard. 'Now, frail Calista, for the lines.' Then they began to recite verses, walking up and down with strange gestures and great vehemence—she sometimes sweeping across the floor as if she had whole yards of train behind her; he, as if clutching at a sword.

It was the scene in the 'Fair Penitent' in which the unworthy Calista receives the vows

of Altamont. He says, with a face full of exalted joy and looks of the most tender love :

> 'Begone, dull cares! I give you to the winds
> Far to be borne, far from the happy Altamont!
> Calista is the mistress of the year :
> She crowns the seasons with auspicious beauty,
> And bids even all my hours be good and joyful.'

To which she, repentant, though he knows not why, replies, hiding her head in her hands :

> 'If I were ever mistress of such happiness,
> Oh! wherefore did I play the unthrifty fool,
> And, wasting all on others, leave myself
> Without one thought of joy, to give me comfort?'

'He is not drunk, Tom,' I whispered, wondering ; because, at first, I thought that must be Mr. Hilyard's condition. 'It is beautiful. But what are they doing?'

'That is play-acting, simpleton. Look at him now!'

They had stopped, and gone on to another scene. Mr. Hilyard was now another character ; his face expressed mingled emotions of scorn, pity, and sternness, while the

actress declaimed the well-known lines beginning :

> 'Is this the famous friend of Altamont ?'

After which came his turn, and he spoke like one who carries fate in his hand :

> 'Alas ! This rage is vain ; for if your fame
> Or peace be worth your care, you must be calm
> And listen to the means are left to save 'em.'

And so on—a strange wild scene of horror and reproach.

Well, when they finished, there was a great shouting of applause, and a swearing, with needless imprecations, that Wilks himself could not have played the part better ; to which Mr. Hilyard replied, without any show or pretence of modesty, that indeed they were quite right, and that at Oxford he was always understood to be a great deal better actor than even that tragedian.

He then hoped the punch was to their liking, and begged them to fill their glasses again, which they very willingly did.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I will now give you another taste of my quality. You shall see

that we scholars of Oxford are not without parts.'

He thereupon took off his full wig, and borrowed a worn bobtail from the oldest of the company, who was sitting by the fire, toasting his toes and drinking his punch, without taking any interest in what was doing. He might have been the father of the troop, and, in fact, was the father of some of them. Mr. Hilyard, then, borrowing this wig, put it on his own head ; and, to be sure, a most ludicrous appearance he did present. Never did one imagine that a change of wig could make so great a difference in a man's appearance. His face became short again ; his mouth was set askew, and he seemed laughing with his very eyes.

'Why,' whispered Tom, 'who ever thought he could laugh at all ? He has been with us five years, and never a smile till now !'

As the red firelight fell upon his face it seemed brimful of mirth, joy, and merriment, as if he could never do anything but laugh. His eyes swam with cheerfulness ; there was no such thing as care in the whole world, one would have thought. Yet the same face that

I knew so well, although now I seemed never to have known it before. Oh! figure of Virtue in a brown coat, and Piety with sober face, and Learning with decorous gravity, where art thou?

The actors looked at him with admiration. Not one of them could twist and turn his face so well. As for me, it was not admiration, but amazement.

'Didst ever see the like, Doll!' whispered Tom.

We still held the door ajar, and peeped through unregarded by any of the company.

Next, Mr. Hilyard, still with this face of smiles, turned a chair down, and sat upon it as if upon a saddle. Then he folded his arms, and delivered an oration in verse, at which everybody laughed loud and long. For my own part, I saw nothing to laugh at, for the verses were all about everybody being an ass—a thing to make people cry, rather than laugh. The cit, they said, was an ass, the soldier was an ass, the lawyer was an ass, the sailor was an ass, and so forth. Perhaps the punch made the company the better disposed to laugh. When the speaker had finished,

they all protested, with profane oaths, that Will Pinkiman himself had never given that epilogue better.

'Will Pinkiman, gentlemen!' cried Mr. Hilyard, getting off his chair. A fig for Will Pinkiman! Why, though to be sure he hath some merit, where is his fire compared to mine?'

'Where, indeed, sir?' repeated the fellow in the scarlet coat, with his tongue in his cheek. 'A better than Will Pinkiman is here. I drink your health, sir.'

'Gentlemen,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'an evening like this does one good. Believe me, I have never sung a single song, or played a single piece, for five years. In the north a man of my parts is truly wasted and thrown away.'

'Come with us, sir,' said the youngest actress, who had played Calista with him. 'Sure, a gentleman like you would make a fortune on the boards.'

'Nay, fair Calista, or Celinda, as thou wilt. There, indeed, you must hold me excused. Had your boards been the boards of Old Drury, it might be different. In that Temple of Thespis would be my proper home.'

He then called for another bowl of punch to be got ready against the other's giving out, and taking up a fiddle which belonged to one of the company, he struck a chord or two, and began to play very sweetly. First he played the tune of 'May Fair,' then of 'Cheshire Rounds,' then 'Ye Lasses and Lads,' and lastly he played 'The Countryman's Delight.' After which he laid down the bow, and looked about for applause, which came in thunders.

'Why,' whispered Tom, 'I thought he could play none but Psalm tunes on the spinet.'

This done—just, I suppose, to show the players another of his accomplishments—he gave back the fiddle to its owner, and requested him to play an air which he named, and, I suppose, was very well known, to which he said he would sing a little song of his own composition.

'Lord!' Tom murmured, 'he is going to sing next.'

He did sing, having a very sweet, melodious, and powerful voice, not slurring his words as some singers do, for the sake of harmonizing the tune, nor forgetting his tune

in order to give more emphasis to his words, as is the way with others.

'Sweet Amoret, 'tis you, I vow,
Whose soft, prevailing charms
Have bound my hopes of heaven now
To live within, to live within thine arms.

'But if condemned by thy disdain,
And of thy smiles bereft;
Still let me nurse the tender pain,
Though no more hope, though no more hope be left.

'He stakes his all to win or lose,
Who sets his hopes so high,
And finds too late he cannot choose
But still to love, but still to love—and die.'

'Mr. Tofts himself,' said the fair Celinda (or frail Calista), wiping a tear—but I fear a false one—'could not have sung this song more sweetly, or more touched my heart.'

Mr. Hilyard smiled as one who is superior even to Mr. Tofts, and said that, for a private man, not a professor of the Art, he thought he had sung his own foolish song indifferent well. But, oh! you may think of the surprise of the girl peeping through the door. He to sing a love-song! Would skies drop next?

Now I was not so young or so ignorant but I could plainly see that whether Mr. Hilyard acted or sang well or ill, the company were fooling him for the sake of his punch. Also that they looked on with approval while the girl with the soiled silk petticoat and the large eyes plied their entertainer with praise, and kept filling his glass between the performances. After the song she said that she would like nothing so much as to rehearse with him a scene from the 'Mourning Bride;' that she had all her life been looking for some gentleman, not a common actor, but a gentleman (here the men grinned) who could not only give the lines with fire, but also look the part, and be as handsome in his person and courtly in his manner as Mr. Hilyard (here he stroked his chin and wagged his head and smiled, but the men grinned again, and took more punch). But, she said, taking out her handkerchief and weeping, unluckily, as all her friends present knew well, she could not afford a dress becoming to the part, and even had to play queens and chambermaids in the same frock, so unhappy she was. The other women murmured, 'Poor thing! and

Gospel truth! and the Lord knows! But a kind gentleman!' The men took more whisky punch, and Mr. Hilyard, now a little flushed with praise and punch combined, and the girl's eyes, which were kept fixed upon him (so the cunning snake charms the silly coney), and her wheedling voice—for she had a very soft and winning voice—began to shed tears too, out of compassion, and lugging out his purse, swore—could one believe that he should ever swear?—that she should make such an appearance on the stage as would show off her beautiful face and lovely figure to the best advantage, and gave her two or three guineas. She fell on her knees, calling him her preserver and her patron. The other women held up their hands, crying, 'Oh, the generous gentleman! And this comes of a feeling heart, and of knowing what acting should be! And heaven, surely, hath its choicest blessings for one so good of heart!' But the men took more punch.

Then Mr. Hilyard raised the cunning jade (who I could see very well was only pretending) and lifted her on his own knee, and began to kiss her, the other women murmur-

ing that an honest girl might let the gentleman have so much liberty in return for his goodness.

'O Lord! O Lord!' murmured Tom. 'This after what he said to me only yesterday!'

The men tipped the wink to each other, and drank more punch. Then, as Mr. Hilyard showed no sign of any more acting, one of them, putting down his glass, began to sing a song, at which the women stopped their ears and the men began to laugh, and Tom dragged me away. And so an end of the most wonderful evening ever seen.

'Now,' cried Tom, 'what do you think of Mr. Hilyard, Dorothy?'

'Truly, Tom,' I replied, 'I know not what to think or to say.'

'Nor I. Well, he hath fooled us all; but we have found him out. Why, if he had only told me before what he could do, what evenings should we have had in this dull old house! After all, there are only a few months to wait. Dorothy, breathe not a word to my father or to Jack.'

Amazed, indeed, I was that Mr. Hilyard, of

all men, should perform these antics! As well expect the Bishop of Durham, Lord Crewe himself, that venerable Father of the Church, to stand up for the Cobbler's Dance, or the Vicar of Bamborough, a divine of great gravity, to grin through a horse-collar!

'In the morning,' said Tom, who seemed as much delighted at the discovery as I was amazed and grieved (for surely it is sad to find folly in a wise man's mouth—oh, how often had he admonished us both out of Solomon's Proverbs!)—'in the morning you shall see me smoke old Sobersides.'

Well, in the morning, when I expected the poor man to appear crestfallen and full of shame, Mr. Hilyard came down exactly the same to look upon as usual, save that he seemed thirsty. To be sure, he knew not that he had been observed. Yet surely he must have remembered, with repentance, the foolishness of the night.

'I have heard, sir,' said Tom presently, looking as meek as a sheep, 'that a company of players passed through the town last night.'

Mr. Hilyard replied that a report to that

effect had also reached his ears. He then proceeded to pronounce an eulogium on the Art of Acting, which, he said, was in his opinion second only to the divine gifts of poetry and music; that a man who was able to act should behave with modest gratitude for the possession of so great a quality; and he proceeded to give examples to prove the greatness of actors, from Roscius, who made a fortune of fifty millions of sesterces—which seems a prodigious great sum, though I know not how many guineas go to make a sesterce—unto the great Monsieur Baron, still living, and the favourite of the Paris ladies, although he was retired from the stage for twelve years and more.

'Have you yourself, sir,' asked Tom, 'ever witnessed the performance of a play in London?'

'It hath been my good fortune on many occasions,' replied his tutor, 'to see the play both at Drury Lane and the Haymarket. Perhaps I may be permitted to witness the exhibition of that divine Art again before I die.'

'The best tragic actor is said to be Mr.

Wilks, is he not?' asked Tom, while Dorothy blushed.

'Mr. Wilks hath certainly a great name,' replied Mr. Hilyard. 'Though I knew not you had heard of these things, Tom.'

'And in comic parts one Will Pinkiman, I have been told,' said Tom, 'is considered the best.'

'He certainly is,' replied Mr. Hilyard, with some surprise. 'Who hath told you of Will Pinkiman?'

'Could you, sir, give us any example or imitation of this ingenious man? One would like to know how Pinkiman, for instance, pronounced the comical epilogue seated on an ass, on whose head he had placed a wig.'

Mr. Hilyard, somewhat disconcerted, changed colour, and drank off a pint or so of the small-ale with which he made his breakfast. Then he hemmed solemnly, and replied gravely:

'Such an imitation is not, indeed, beyond my powers. And I perceive, Tom, that thou hast heard something of yesterday evening, and perhaps witnessed the entertainment which I provided for those poor but virtuous

and ingenious people who passed the night at the inn. The Art of Acting was not included in the subjects which your father and Lady Crewe considered necessary for a gentleman. Therefore, I have abstained from ever speaking of it. Certainly it is no more necessary than that of painting, playing an instrument, sculpture, singing, carving, or any of those arts by which the daily life of the rich is embellished and in some countries the lives of the poor are made happy.'

He then, with so much gravity that one could not but remember the merry face of last night, proceeded to discourse upon the impersonation of character, and actually depicted before us, without leaving his chair, and simply by changing the expression of his face, and by various gestures of his hands, the diverse emotions of pity, terror, awe, expectancy, resignation, wrath, revenge, submission, love, jealousy, and suspicion, and all so naturally, and with so much dignity, that we were awed, and when we expected to laugh, or to make the poor man ashamed, we were made ashamed ourselves.

He concluded by warning us that, if we

chanced to see a man who possessed this genius performing a foolish or mean part, we must be careful not to confound the man with the character which he assumed; to remember that many illustrious persons, including the Grand Monarque himself, had figured in operas, ballets, comic pieces, and burlettas, not to speak of Nero, a great artist, though a great monster, and Commodus; and to regard the stage as the finest school in the world for virtue and good manners; although as yet it must be owned, he said, that there was still—as regards Comedy—something to desire.

'Who would think,' said Tom, when he had concluded, and left us gaping at each other, 'who would think that only yesterday evening he was hugging and kissing the actress?'

Now this event happened a very short time before Tom came of age. He spoke no more about it to me, nor did Mr. Hilyard again discourse of acting. It was not till a week before his birthday that Tom opened upon the subject again.

'Dorothy,' he said, 'I have been thinking

that for Mr. Hilyard to go away, when he hath become so useful to all of us, would be a great pity.'

'Why should Mr. Hilyard leave us, Tom?'

'Why, child, a man needs no tutor or guardian when he is twenty-one years of age. As for you and me, we shall live together; but you will miss him more than I, especially when I am away with my friends.'

'Oh, Tom, who will——' But here I stopped, because there were so many things that Mr. Hilyard did for us that I could not tell which to begin with.

'Who will keep the accounts—look after the cellar, the stables, and the dogs; make my flies, look after my feeders and my cocks; read books with you, talk about the Romans, spout poetry, and—what, Dorothy?'

'Sing songs and play the fiddle, Tom?' I asked timidly, because I had never dared to ask Mr. Hilyard to repeat that pretty performance.

'And act like Will Pinkiman, and keep a whole roomful of men in a continual laugh—who, Dorothy?'

'Why, no one, Tom.'

'There is no one. I believe there is no one in all England who can act, and play, and sing like Mr. Hilyard, demure as he looks, and purring like a cat all these years. Dorothy, if madam had seen him!'

'Oh, Tom! Don't tell her.'

'I am not going to tell her. Now, listen, child: I have a plan, and I will tell thee what it is. He hath been with us so long that he knows our affairs and our most private concerns. I doubt not that he is honest, and his play-acting—did you ever see the like?'

Tom fell into a kind of reverie, and remained speechless for a while. Then he broke out into a great fit of laughter, and began to imitate Mr. Hilyard's face and speech (but at a long distance) when he sat upon the chair:

'"Your fighting ass is a Bully,
Your sneaking ass is a Cit,
Your keeping ass is a Cully,
Your top prime ass is a Wit."

How well he did it, sister! I have thought it over, my mind is quite made up; I will ask

him to stay with me. He shall be my secretary or clerk, the steward of my affairs; he shall keep my books for me, and deal with my tenants. As for me, I shall ride, shoot, fish, and entertain my friends; in the evening, Mr. Hilyard shall have as much drink as he likes, and shall sing, play, and act for the amusement of my company. I will give him, besides his meat and drink, five-and-thirty pounds a year in money.'

On the twenty-first birthday there were rejoicings and a great feast held. Strange to see how Tom (who had, to be sure, been longing eagerly for the day) stepped into his place, no longer a minor, but now one of the gentlemen of the county. His head had been shaved, and he wore for the first time, but rather awkwardly, a beautiful full wig, the curls of which, hanging over his shoulders, greatly set forth the natural beauty of his features, and lent dignity to his appearance. He was also dressed in a purple coat with crimson lining, a white silk waistcoat, and scarlet leather shoes with gold buckles (they had belonged to Mr. Ferdinando), and he wore, for the first time, a sword.

'Now, Dorothy,' he said complacently, 'I feel I am a man at last. Remember what I said about Mr. Hilyard.'

Among those who offered their congratulations was the tutor; but he wore a sad downcast countenance, because he looked for nothing less than to be sent away, his business being at last accomplished, and his pupil now of age.

He laid down his office, he said, with as much regret as Seneca, once tutor to the Emperor Nero. 'But,' he added, 'my own worth falls as far short of that philosopher as my pupil's character surpasses that of Nero. Wherefore, in parting from so generous a patron, I have no other consolation than the recollection of faithful service in the cultivation of so fruitful a soil as the brain of Mr. Forster, and the hope of letters recommendatory which may obtain for me other and equally suitable employment.'

'Truly, suitable,' said Tom, laughing. Mr. Hilyard blushed, but the rest wondered. 'As for parting,' Tom went on, 'there go two to make a parting. Why not stay with me?'

The poor tutor, whose face had been

growing longer day by day for two months, shook his head.

'My occupation,' he said, 'is gone.'

'As for occupation,' Tom replied, 'what say you to board and lodging, as much wine and punch as you can hold whenever there is company, and five-and-thirty pounds a year?'

'But the duties—the work——'

'Why—that is the work, to eat and drink, and make merry.'

'Mr. Hilyard to eat and drink, and make merry?' cried madam. 'Make merry? He?'

'Why,' said Tom, 'that is what we are asking him to do. He will be strange to it at first, I fear. But I warrant you, give him but a month, and you shall see a change indeed. He will then be able to sing like Mr. Tofts, act like Will Pinkiman, drink like—like any man among us, play the fiddle, and——'

'Is it possible, Mr. Hilyard?' asked my father. 'Ho! ho! I believe no more in grave faces. This is indeed a hiding of lights beneath a bushel.' For the tutor hung his head and looked foolish.

'If you want any other occupation,' Tom continued, 'there are accounts to keep, tenants to reprove, grooms and feeders to overlook, my sister to amuse, and, in fact, all the things you have done for the last five years.'

'Your honour means this seriously?' asked Mr. Hilyard.

'Certainly I do.'

'Then, sir'—his face lightened, and he looked round him with a cheerful smile—'I accept your generous offer gratefully. I confess that the position and work of a tutor have ever been distasteful to me, and I have only hidden those small accomplishments of mine, which now you have discovered, because I feared they would be considered inconsistent with an almost sacred calling.'

'Why, then, there is no more to say,' cried Tom, 'except to shake hands upon it.'

'Yet there is one condition, if I may venture——'

'Venture, man.'

'I pray that I be not expected to go fox-hunting. I love not, in truth, to risk my neck for a thing I never see, and which if I were to get I should not want.'

'That is granted,' said Tom, laughing, because some of Mr. Hilyard's adventures on horseback had been ludicrous to the beholders, but painful to himself.

'There is also one other thing,' Mr. Hilyard continued, with a look, sideways, at myself, of which I afterwards thought with a kind of pity. 'A faithful steward wants the whole day for the management of your honour's business and the occasions and services of Miss Dorothy. I would, with submission, ask that I be only invited to lay aside those duties in the evening, when I shall be always pleased to place my poor talents, such as they are, at the service of your honour and your friends.'

'My hand on't,' said Tom heartily, 'and so, honest Tony'—he called him Tony on that day and ever afterwards. Yet hitherto he had never spoken to him except bareheaded as to a parent or superior, and called him always 'Sir.' So quickly does a young man change when he comes to his twenty-first year. 'So, honest Tony, thou prince of brave topers, stay with me. Read your books with missy

all the day, but, by gad, all night you shall sing and drink your fill with the best company in the county!'

'Are we dreaming?' cried madam.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHIEF CREDITOR.

It was in this way that our tutor remained with us. My brother never did a wiser thing, nor made a better bargain; for if Mr. Hilyard was serviceable before, he was ten times as serviceable now, by his care and watchfulness saving expense here and preventing waste there. He took, in a word, the conduct of all Tom's affairs, showing himself as capable and competent in administration as he had been a faithful tutor.

For my own part (not to speak, more than can be helped, of the way in which his evenings were too often employed), I found him a much more delightful companion now that he had no occasion for the austerity of a tutor. Yet he preserved his gravity during the working hours of the day.

'I may at some time of my life,' he said, 'take upon me the vows of Holy Orders, for which I have ever had an ardent desire. One would almost as soon preach in a London church as deliver verses on the boards of Drury Lane, except for the applause, which, in the Early Church, was not wanting. Wherefore I still cultivate the habit of a decorous carriage. Yet I confess to you, Miss Dorothy, that there have been moments, before Mr. Forster came of age, when I have had a vehement yearning upon me to put on, as I may say, the old Adam. That temptation has now disappeared.'

Probably, as he put on the natural Adam nearly every evening, the cause of the temptation was removed. 'Twas as if a gambler should cease to feel the desire for gambling in the morning after he had begun to gamble every night. Mr. Hilyard became, in fact, much more pleasant. He would play tender and moving airs upon the fiddle, and, though he reserved his powers of imitation and drollery for the gentlemen (ladies being too often unable to see anything to laugh at in what pleases men after supper), he would

sometimes sing very sweetly such songs as 'Love finds out the way,' or 'Jockey's Lamentation.' And often when we were alone, my brother being away with friends, he would beguile an evening with a scene from Shakespeare, which he would act and read with surprising force.

I need not speak of his powers wholly with admiration, because their exercise had led him, as will presently be seen, to disgrace and almost to ruin. It was, when one thinks of it, a truly dreadful thing for a man who was a scholar and student of theology, of great learning, noble parts, and true eloquence, to be carried away by a love of buffoonery and the desire to display a monkey-like power of imitation. A pretty reward, indeed, of his labours as tutor, to be made the Merry Andrew, Clown, and Tom Fool of the whole company whenever Tom gathered his friends together. Ought they not rather to be ashamed of seeing so learned a man thus lower himself? Yet they showed no signs of compunction or shame, but at each new monkey-trick they cheered the louder and laughed the longer. Happily, women are

removed from this temptation (though we have plenty left). We do not desire to be continually laughing, and we cannot understand what there is in most things to laugh at, nor why, because men get together, they must be for ever singing, laughing, and making merry. Everybody will understand, however, that this strange thing was speedily bruited abroad, and that the possession of this entertaining Oxford scholar brought gentlemen to our house. My brother, easy and hospitable, loved to entertain his friends, and they, not to be behindhand, constantly returned the compliment, especially in the hunting season, so that there was seldom a week without a feast and a carouse.

My time, from the year 1707 to the year 1710, was spent chiefly with Tom at the Manor House. In the latter year Lord Derwentwater came home, which made a great change, as you will presently hear, for all of us. In the morning it was my duty, even when quite young, to order the household, so that I became, in course of time, a notable woman, skilled in the preparation of conserves, jellies, pies, cakes, biscuits, pud-

dings, stuffings, strong waters, perfumes, and home-made wines; good at embroidery, and able to play the spinet with some freedom and delicacy; also, I could make and mend, cut out, fashion, sew, and trim with any woman: in such pursuits my forenoon was entirely occupied, as well as that of my still-room maid, who was no other than that Jenny Lee, the Midsummer Witch, when we all had our fortunes told—I am bound to say that, whatever her subsequent conduct, she was the most faithful, dexterous, and zealous maid to me, and I never had the least fault to find with her. My old nurse, Judith (who had been Tom's nurse as well, and loved not madam), sat all day long in her armchair, reposing after a life spent in faithful service. One morning she slept so long beside the fire that I tried to awaken her for dinner; but could not, for she had slept through her passage from this world to the next.

In the afternoon, dinner over, Mr. Hilyard would sometimes read aloud out of a book, or we would read French together, or he would discourse upon matters of high import; or he would walk with me in the castle, or upon

the sands, or across the fields, finding always something of instruction. Let me never forget how much I am indebted to this good and patient man (good and patient all the day, that is; though in those days somewhat deboshed with drink at night). It is through him that I learned something of history, geography, knowledge of the world we live in, and the stars beyond; yea, even my humble gratitude to the Divine Designer and Architect of the Universe, was first inspired by this modest scholar, in pointing out the wonders of the earth and the motions of the heavenly bodies.

Very shortly after Tom came of age he received a letter from Lady Crewe, his coheir, which might have very seriously alarmed a man of a less sanguine and hopeful character. What Tom believed he held as matter of faith, out of which no one could shake him. Now he held, as clearly as the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church (but with much less reason), that the great estates he inherited were as inexhaustible as the mines of Potosi. There had been, it is true, and he knew it, three successive holders of the

property, who all spent, every year, more than their yearly income. Further, he knew that Lord Crewe had bought in a rent-charge of £500 a year. And this letter ought to have made him consider his position very carefully; but it did not.

'My dear Nephew and Coheir,' her ladyship wrote,—'It is with infinite pain that I hereby inform you that the creditors of my late brothers have taken such steps as will result in our estate being thrown into Chancery, the effect of which cannot but be disastrous to us both, though, in the long-run, we shall perhaps recover. As regards present expenses, we shall have to appoint some trustworthy servant as steward of the property till such time as the lawyers have done with it and the creditors are satisfied. And you may rest assured of my care that your income shall be sufficient for you to live at the Manor House, though not in the state which my brothers were able to maintain. You will have fewer horses and servants; you will not be able, at present, to bear the charges of a seat in Parliament; but you will

continue (I will take care therefor) to live on your estates, and in your own house. And, should I remain unhappily a childless wife, you will, on my death, succeed to my moiety. Therefore, my dear nephew, bid little Dorothy take care that there be no waste in the kitchen; buy no more horses; make no bets; run no matches; keep my late brother's cellar for days of company; provide your table chiefly by your gun; make no debts; and hope continually that the years of lean kine will be but few, and will soon pass away.

'Your loving Aunt,

'DOROTHY CREWE.'

Tom read this letter slowly.

'"Fewer horses!"' he said. 'Why, I have but half a dozen or so as it is. "Fewer servants!" Then who is to keep the poor varlets if I send them adrift? "Make no bets!" Why, my lady, there you must please to excuse me, for a gentleman must make bets. "Run no matches!" Well, not many. What does she mean by "lean kine"?'

'Her ladyship refers to the dream of Pharaoh,' said Mr. Hilyard.

'Then I wish her ladyship would talk plain English. After all, it will be but a year or two, and then—— Tony, what the devil are you looking so glum about?'

'Chancery,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'means more than a year or two. Lawyers are like that famous vampire-bat, said to exist in Hungary, which seizes on a creature, and never lets go while there is blood left.'

It is wonderful to relate that Tom never took the least trouble to find out what the liabilities were, or how long it would take to pay them off. Meanwhile, there was no change in his manner of living, save that he bought no more horses, hired no new servants, and restrained himself from those things which require a great outlay of money. I know not how the money was found for the daily charges, but I suppose that Lady Crewe could tell, for the estates were really thrown into Chancery, where they remained for six years. Mr. Hilyard, I believe, but am not certain, was appointed steward. Also I know now that, one after the other, the creditors were mostly bought up by Lord Crewe.

With wings thus clipped, supposed to be

the owner of a great estate, of which he could enjoy nothing, Tom could not take the same position in the county as had been enjoyed by his predecessors. Yet there was always the generous hospitality of the north, and the great cellar of wine left by Mr. Ferdinando held out even against Tom's friends, who were mostly young, and all of them gifted with a great appetite and thirst; and as long familiarity with danger makes one cease to believe in it (as a sailor puts forth to meet the perils of the seas without a thought upon them), so Tom went on, taking no heed for the morrow, as if the broad lands of Bamborough were really his own, as they had been Sir William's. Yet, as I grew older, and could understand things better, I learned from Mr. Hilyard that his own expectancy for the future was gloomy indeed, for all of us—for Tom, who might lose the greater part of his estate; for myself, who would lose, so to speak, whatever he lost; and for himself, because he would lose employment to his mind, and a patron who was generous in his way, though sometimes quick with his tongue, and so might be turned again upon the world to seek his fortune at five or

six and thirty years of age, when a man ought to be settled in the way of life by which he earns his bread.

'I doubt,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'whether, when all is done, there will remain for the coheirs enough to give a bare living to his honour. All will go to Lord Crewe, who, I hear, is buying up the remaining creditors. We know not what may be the intentions of his lordship, but he is growing old, and may die; or he may intend—but, indeed, we know not what he may intend, except that it is poor work for a Forster of Bamborough to look to any man for patronage and support.'

Poor work, truly! even though that man was so near a connection as my lord!

Tom, then, took no thought for the future, believing that the estates would shortly be cleared of all encumbrances, and his inheritance become all his own. Nay, when letters came from the lawyers, written in the language or jargon employed by the members of that profession with intent to darken the judgment and confuse the mind of a plain person, my brother tossed them over to Mr. Hilyard, bidding him read them if he pleased, but not to

vex him by rehearsing their purport, and so, with a whistle to his dogs, off to the sport which chiefly occupied his mind. Nor would he hear afterwards what the letters conveyed to him, though Mr. Hilyard shook his head and groaned, telling me privately that our affairs were going from bad to worse. Like master, like man; he, too, when the bottle went round, shook off dull care, and assumed that fool's cap which belongs to all who willingly dwell in a fool's paradise.

There came the time, however, when the storm, which had been gathering so long, burst upon us in great fury, finding one at least, and that the man most concerned, wholly unprepared.

It was one day in the early autumn of the year 1709, and in the afternoon. My brother was sitting at the open window, with a packet of flies in his hands (they were made for him by Mr. Hilyard), but half-asleep and nodding, as sometimes happened to him after his dinner and noonday potations of strong ale. He was then twenty-seven years of age. Six years had passed since he came into his own, which was now, alas! to be taken from him,

though he had never really enjoyed more than the shadow and reputation of it. Yet they were six years of fatness, with plenty of feasting, drinking, hunting, shooting, and fishing, so that one may easily understand that Tom looked no longer the gallant and handsome lad who received the congratulations of his friends when he reached his twenty-first year. His cheeks were fuller, and he had already something of a double chin. Yet a comely man still.

I have always thought it a great happiness that Tom was in no hurry to be married. In this respect he resembled many others of his family. His uncles John and Ferdinando, for instance, never married at all, nor hath his brother Jack as yet taken a wife, though he is now (at the time I write) far advanced towards forty. Had Tom become a father of children, this and later troubles might have been more than one could bear.

Then there rode up to the door the post-boy, mounted on his little pony, and blowing his horn, at the noise of which Tom started and woke up ; Mr. Hilyard, who held in his hand a book in Latin, laid it down and went

out, and I put aside my sewing and waited for the news. We were less astonished than most at the arrival of a letter, because we were sometimes privileged to read Lady Swinburne's latest London news. Now it may seem incredible, but it is nevertheless true, and I have experienced the same thing on the occasion of other misfortunes as great, that I felt quite certain beforehand, and while waiting for the letter, that it brought bad news.

'Read it, Tony,' said Tom, giving it back. 'It is from her ladyship. Perhaps it is to say that all is now paid off, and the estate is clear.'

Mr. Hilyard opened the letter, which was a long one, with great care, drew a chair to the window, and there read it.

This most astonishing epistle fell upon us all like a thunderbolt in our midst, as one of the Allies' shells at Oudenarde. Consider; for so many years there had been always before our eyes the prospect of a time when the estates should be free—in a year or two, perhaps, more or less; what mattered? Sooner or later Tom would have his unencumbered moiety, and, as was reasonable to suppose, at my lady's death the whole.

It was a truly dreadful letter. It informed us, in fact, that there was nothing left. Law and the creditors had swallowed all. A thing impossible to believe, and yet most true. There was nothing left. My aunt, in telling us this dreadful thing, talked obscurely about our remaining at the Manor House, with hints about affairs of importance not to be undertaken without communication with her. I was, for my own part, so bewildered, that I understood but half of what she said.

Now, when Mr. Hilyard read, Tom, who began by paying little heed first, sprang to his feet, and then turned white and then red, crying :

'Read that again! Read that again!' And when the letter ended with an exhortation to resignation, Tom sank into his chair, crying, 'For Lord's sake, Tony, tell me without her ladyship's rigmarole—Death and Furies! what have I to do with resignation?—what it means.'

'It means, sir,' Mr. Hilyard replied, 'briefly this : The Bamborough estates have been all, by order of the Lord Chancellor, sold for the benefit of the creditors. Lord Crewe hath

bought the whole for the sum of £20,000, and the amount due to her ladyship and yourself, the lawyers and creditors having been paid, and the rent-charges provided for, is not more than £1,020, of which you, who take the moiety, will receive £510 exactly.'

Then there was silence, during which we looked anxiously at Tom, whose face was swollen, and so red that I feared he would have a fit of some kind.

'So all is gone,' he said, at length. 'A goodly inheritance, indeed! Five hundred pounds!'

'Your honour forgets,' replied Mr. Hilyard, 'that you are still the heir of Etherston. As to the land of the Bamborough Forsters, that seems to have taken unto itself wings. If one cannot trust in land, in what shall man place his trust?'

'I am the heir of Etherston—that is true. But my father's estate can do little more than keep himself and his family. Shall I have to go back to him and live upon his bounty?' To this, being greatly moved and beyond himself, he added many strong words and oaths, which may be passed over.

'Not so, sir,' said Mr. Hilyard. 'With

submission, if you go back, Miss Dorothy will go with you ; and I must needs go back into the world, naked as I came into it at my birth. Therefore, I trust this will not happen. As for this house and all these lands, they are indeed the property of the Lord Bishop ; but there seems a way —nay, her ladyship herself indicates a way. You will remain here—as her nephew.'

'A fine way, truly ! I am to be a beggar —a pensioner—a dependent upon my aunt.'

'Nay ; the eldest son of Mr. Thomas, and the grandson of Sir William Forster, must not be called by anyone a beggar, or a pauper, or a dependent, even though his aunt, who is wealthy, provide the expenses of his establishment. Her ladyship clearly signifies her desire that you should continue as if this purchase had not been made, and that you should live in the same style as at present, which is not, I am aware, the style befitting Mr. Ferdinando's successor, or equal to the splendour of his state ; but yet it is the style and manner of a gentleman, and equal to that of your honour's father; and she further clearly specifies her intention, if I read her aright,

that out of the revenues of the estates such a sum shall be reserved for your use as may be found necessary.'

'Yes—but on conditions.'

'With submission, sir, again: on reasonable conditions. She desires only that no important step be taken by you without her consent. That is to say, and, by way of illustration, when you desire to marry, you would signify your intention to her ladyship. That is what you would naturally do towards your lamented mother's sister.'

'Tilly vally, Tony, that is not what her ladyship means. You know very well what she does mean.'

'Then, sir,' said Mr. Hilyard, apparently without attention to this interruption, 'there is also the danger which threatens the whole country, and especially the north. Her ladyship, knowing your honour's courage, loyalty, and daring, is right in fearing that you might be led into some rash enterprise, like the late Sir John Fenwick, in which you might lose not only your head but also your estates. This danger, sir, I for one, if I may venture to say so, have felt especially of late to be

very great. Consider, that you are acknowledged by all to be by birth and position, as well as by abilities, foremost among the Protestant gentlemen of the north.'

'That may be so, Tony,' said Tom, softening. 'I do not say that thou art wrong.'

'A natural leader of the Cause, and of great daring.'

'It is true,' said Tom, wagging his head.

'Round whom the people will rally.'

'If not,' said Tom, sitting down, 'I should like to know round whom they *will* rally.'

'Next,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'it is very well known that there hath been of late a great increase of agitation in the counties and in the towns. Private advices reach us from London of the clubs, of the enthusiasm for Dr. Sacheverell, and the loyalty even of the mob. Her ladyship desires, naturally, that when you take that step, which will go far to decide the victory of the Cause she hath at heart——'

'It will,' cried Tom. 'It must.'

'She shall know beforehand, if only—but this I guess—in order that you may be enabled

to make a fitting appearance in the field. A Forster may not be as magnificent as the Duke of Ormond, but he must be suitably equipped and followed.'

'Why,' said Tom, 'if that is all her ladyship means——'

'What more, sir, may I ask, can she mean? As your honour's aunt, she is anxious for your safety; as a woman, she reveres the head of her branch; also, as a woman, saving Miss Dorothy's presence, having the power of the purse, she desires to keep it. As for what she intends, that is to me very certain. She hath been married more than ten years, and hath no children; she is already over forty; her husband is past seventy-five years of age, and will leave to his widow all he can, if he does not leave her all he has; her ladyship's devotion to her own family is well known. To whom should she bequeath her wealth, save to your honour?'

'True,' said Tom, 'it is natural. My lord is very rich.'

'You will therefore become,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'before many years, the richest gentleman in the north.'

'I shall then rebuild the castle, and live within its walls,' said Tom.

'You will certainly be able to do this, and to revive the old state of your ancestors, Sir John and Sir Claudius.'

'I shall also restore the ancient Tower of Blanchland, and make a noble residence of it.'

'Sir, the idea is worthy of the great position you will then hold.'

'As for you, Tony, I have made up my mind. You shall take Holy Orders and become my chaplain, with two hundred pounds a year.'

'Your honour is indeed generous.'

'I shall also go into the House. By that time the Prince will have his throne. He will reward those who have been faithful to him.'

'An earldom at least,' said Mr. Hilyard.

'At least,' said Tom, kindling. 'The Earl of Blanchland, eh? It would be as fine as the Earl of Derwentwater.'

'Even at present,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'your honour may marry in any family you choose, being of so old and honourable a house. But

then—with Lord Crewe's inheritance and the Sovereign's favour—of course you will be sworn of the Privy Council——'

'Of course,' answered Tom proudly.

'Earl of Blanchland, of His Majesty's Privy Council; Knight of the Garter—I think, my lord—I mean, your honour—we may say Knight of the Garter——'

'You may,' said Tom, laying his fingers round his leg; 'you may, sir.'

'Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Northumberland; Hereditary Grand Warden of the March (an honour only to be asked for); Governor of the Castle of Bamborough; Lord of the Manor of Etherston——'

'I give that,' said Tom, 'to my brother Jack. It is not worth keeping.'

'With all these distinctions, is there an heiress or a lady in all England but would rejoice at such an alliance?'

'Gad!' said Tom, 'you put things as they should be put. Tony, your salary as my chaplain shall be four hundred, not two. You shall be a king among chaplains! But when you have the cassock and the bands, you will not cease from drinking and singing, will you?'

'Sir,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'I shall be like unto Friar John des Entommeurs. In the gown I shall only drink the deeper.'

With such persuasion and artful show of hope did Mr. Hilyard soothe the disappointment of this dreadful blow, so that poor Tom, although without a penny (save his five hundred pounds), and dependent wholly upon the bounty of my aunt, felt himself in imagination exalted to the highest rank, and possessing all those distinctions which are most coveted.

'Write to her ladyship, my good friend,' he said, with the majesty of an Earl in his manner; 'tell her in suitable terms that I agree to her proposals. Bring me the draft of the letter, and I will write it in my own hand, after I have corrected it. You can tell Jack, Dorothy, that I shall give him Etherston when the time comes.'

Alas! Jack has got Etherston, and has held it now for fourteen years. But what did poor Tom get?

Then—the kind brother—he thought upon his sister.

'What shall I give thee, Dorothy?' he

asked. 'Truly, if it depended upon me, thou shouldst have the finest husband in the world, and the richest dower.'

So he kissed me on the forehead, and left us.

'Man,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'is ever allured by the things which are of least use to him. Who would be Earl and Knight of the Garter, and bear the weight and fardel of greatness? Who would not rather be a plain country gentleman, with an estate in land, a troop of friends, and a goodly cellar? His honour hath lost his whole substance. He hath remaining not one acre of land nor one shilling of revenue; yet is he happy, because he will now have continually before his eyes the inheritance of Lord Crewe.'

'But you think——'

'Nay, I am sure. I have deceived him in nought, except in this. Her ladyship is, it is true, forty years of age, but she may very well live as long as her nephew. But to tell him this in his present mood would be the same as to kick over the basket of eggs out of which this mighty fortune was to be made. I have also hidden another thing, which I

confess with shame. I am informed that Lord Derwentwater will certainly return early in the year. He is young and ardent; he will gather round him, no doubt, all the hot-brains and hair-brains of the county. Lady Crewe knows this, because she knows all. Who can tell what may happen? Is she not right to ensure that her nephew, if he risk his neck, shall risk nothing else?'

CHAPTER VII.

ROOM FOR MY LORD.

It was in the year of grace seventen hundred and ten that Lord Derwentwater, who had been living abroad from childhood, returned to his native country. He was then in his twenty-first year, having been born on the 28th of June, 1689, being a year younger than the Prince, his cousin, whose education he shared, and whose playfellow he was. To one of those who welcomed him back—a woman—it will always seem as if her life had something of meanness in it before he came. Until then, she knew not what was meant by the manners and airs which are learned only at such Courts as those of Versailles and St. James's; nor did she know before how splendid a being is a man who, besides being master of all the manly accomplishments, as

most of the Northumberland gentlemen are, also possesses the language of gallantry, the manners of a courtier, and the youth and beauty of Apollo. I can but own—why should I be ashamed to own it?—that the admiration which I felt for my lord at the very first appearance and beholding of him, only increased the oftener I saw him and the more I conversed with him. Sure I am that Heaven hath nowhere bestowed upon this generation so goodly and virtuous a nobleman. Yet was he granted to us to gladden our hearts and set us an example of benevolence, courtesy, majesty, and good breeding for five short years. Thus are the greatest blessings granted to mankind (if I may be permitted so to speak of the Heavenly Scheme) with sparing and jealous hands.

It was by way of the Low Countries that the Earl returned to England, because the Long War, although it was drawing to a close, was still raging. Indeed, it was but a short while since the famous battle of Malplaquet, where the vanquished suffered not half so much loss as the victors, and our

valiant Prince charged twelve times with the French regiment of Household Troops. Lord Derwentwater was accompanied only by his two brothers, Francis and Charles, the latter of whom was but a lad of sixteen, and his gentleman, Mr. Welby (afterwards hanged at Liverpool). He was met in London by his uncle, Colonel Thomas Radcliffe, and his cousin, Mr. Fenwick of Bywell (a near relation of the unhappy man who slew Mr. Ferdinando). As for the Colonel, who lived for the most part at Radcliffe House, in Newcastle, he was a most worthy and honourable gentleman, but subject to a strange infirmity. For he imagined that he was being constantly pursued by an enemy armed with a sword, so that when he walked abroad he constantly looked behind him, and when he sat at table he would suddenly spring to his feet and lay hand upon his sword; and at night he would leap from his bed, try the locks and bars of his door, and throw open the window. For this reason he went to Newcastle by water, a method of travelling which gave him the greatest content, because on board ship he fancied himself

safe, except from pirates. It was resolved that, though no secret should be made as to the Earl's arrival, there should be no stay in London, to avoid the danger of his being drawn into some rash design or engagement. For it was his friends' anxious desire that while it should be very well understood that he was the faithful and loyal supporter of the Prince, he was to have no hand in any plots, and was not to move until success was assured.

They were joined in London also by Mr. Henry Howard, a Catholic priest, and cousin to the Duke of Norfolk (would that all priests were like unto this venerable and godly man!). And though they rode straight north, they made not so much haste but that news of their arrival reached the north before they got as far as York; and it was resolved by many of the gentlemen, especially his cousins, to give him welcome at Dilston Hall. As for us, we were doubly his cousins, both by our ancestor, Sir John, who married Jane Radcliffe, widow of Lord Ogle, and his son Nicolas, who married another Jane Radcliffe, heiress of Blanchland.

'Who should go to welcome him if not I, his cousin and near neighbour?' said Tom.

(He was now become quite easy in his mind as regards his own circumstances, and secure of the brilliant succession with which Mr. Hilyard had inflamed his mind.) 'And, if I go, why not you as well, Dorothy?'

You may judge of the joy with which I heard these words. But it was a great undertaking, and needed much consideration, which we entrusted to Mr. Hilyard. He finally resolved for us that we should go, and that we should seize the occasion to spend the whole year at Blanchland, where we might, at least, live retired, and at small charge, the place being eight or nine miles from any neighbours, and in the middle of a wild moor. I think—nay, I am quite sure—that Mr. Hilyard's desire that Tom should spend no money was greater than his wish to greet the Earl, for, though he complained not, it fell to his lot to ask her ladyship for supplies, and to receive the rebukes for prodigality with which she sometimes answered his letters.

My heart was light at the prospect of so great a journey and the sight of strange places, to say nothing of giving a welcome to the

young lord. I cared nothing for the cold wind of February, and the driving sleet and snow in which we began our journey. To me, though the snow lay in piles about the brambles and the bushes, and the wind blew from the north-east, and one's fingers froze, and one's feet in the saddle lost all feeling, the journey was delightful. We were a great party, having with us a whole troop of pack-horses laden with guns, fishing-tackle, clothes, and so forth. There were also Tom's dogs and hounds, his second riding-horse, his grooms, his own man (who shaved him, dressed his wig, and kept his clothes), Mr. Hilyard, and my maid, Jenny Lee. So that we were like a small army, and made, in fact, almost as little progress as an army in motion. The first night we lay at our own house (but it was now Lord Crewe's) at Alnwick; the second we lay at Rothbury, a pleasant town on the Coquet; on the third at Capheaton Castle, where we were hospitably entertained, though Sir William had already gone two days before to Dilston with her ladyship. On the fourth we rode into Hexham.

In this ancient town, which I now saw for

the first time, we found gathered together a goodly company of gentlemen, assembled for the purpose of giving the Earl a hearty welcome home. The street was full of them and of their servants. They stood about the doors of the inns; they drank and sang in little companies. A group of the better sort were gathered in the open square between the church and the old town, where they talked and welcomed new-comers. Lord Widdrington, with his brothers, was reported to be at Beaufront with Mr. Errington; Sir William and Lady Swinburne, with half-a-dozen of the Swinburne brothers, the Ladies Katharine and Mary Radcliffe, and many other cousins, were at Dilston Hall. In Hexham there were Shaftoes, Claverings, Chorleys, Gibsons, and many more. Mad Jack Hall was among them, shouting and vapouring. High over the heads of the crowd towered the great form of Frank Stokoe, six inches taller than any other man in Northumberland. He was not only the tallest, but also the strongest, man in the county. He could crush pewter pots in his hand; he could pull against two horses, lift a couple of hundredweight with

his little finger, stop a cart against a runaway horse, bend iron bars across his arm, and break pence with his fingers. Once he lifted a constable asleep, box and all, and dropped him over the wall into a burying-place. He lived at Chesterwood, near Haydon Bridge, and not far from Lord Derwentwater's Castle of Langley, which lies in ruins these three hundred years, and is like, Heaven knows, to continue in that same evil plight for as many more. Also there were present certain gentlemen—birds of ill omen, Mr. Hilyard called them, always imploring his patron to keep aloof from them, hold no communication with them, and not suffer himself to be enticed into correspondence with them. These are the men who ensnare honest and loyal gentlemen by making them combine, without their knowledge, in conspiracies and plots destined only to failure. Each premature plot, when detected and put down, costs the lives of some of these mischievous men; but the devil speedily raises up others to do his work, lest the wickedness of the world should go less.

Now, as we rode into the crowd, some of the gentlemen shook hands with Tom; and

others greeted me with such compliments as they knew how to make (they were kindly meant; but I was soon to learn the true language of gallantry); and others shouted a welcome to lusty Tony (it is a shame that so great a scholar should consent to such a name), whose appearance and shining countenance promised an evening of merriment. Presently, looking about among the throng, I became aware of a person whom I had never before seen, in cassock and bands, and the most enormous great wig I had ever seen, reminding one of the lines:

> 'His wig was so bushy, so long, and so fair,
> The best part of man was quite covered with hair;
> That he looked, as a body may modestly speak it,
> Like a calf with bald face peeping out of a thicket.'

His eyes were close together, which, I suppose, was the cause of his looking shifty and sly—pigs have such eyes; his nose, like his cheeks, was fat; and his lips were thick and full. Unless his face belied him, he was one of those who loved the sacred profession for the life of ease and the fat eating which may be procured by the fortunate and the swinish. Miserable man! Yet still he lives and still

he preaches, his conscience being seared with a hot iron. Thank Heaven! he is not an enemy of myself, but of my brother; therefore, I am not called upon to forgive him. Indeed, it is only a Christian's duty to regard such as him with abhorrence, as one abhors the devil and all his works.

He was going about with an appearance of great bustle and business, as if everything depended upon himself, whispering to one man, holding another earnestly by the button, taking a pinch of snuff from another with an air of haste. Presently he advanced to us, bowing at every step.

'Sir,' he said to Tom, 'I venture to present myself to your honour. I am the Vicar of Allenhead, your worship's nearest neighbour when you honour Blanchland with a visit; and I venture to call myself one of the right party. Sir, I rejoice to find that you are here with so many noble gentlemen to welcome my Lord of Derwentwater. As for me, my motto is, and still will be, "The right of the first-born is his;" and, if it need more words, "Take away the wicked from before the king." My name, sir, at your service, is Robert Patten,

Artium Magister, and formerly of Lincoln College, Oxford, and—O Lord !——'

For he started back as one who has trodden upon an adder at least, and with a face suddenly pale with fright or astonishment, I know not which. Then I perceived that the cause of his alarm was none other than the sight of Mr. Hilyard. He, for his part, was looking down upon his reverence from his horse with a face as full of disdain and indignation as you can expect from a countenance naturally inclined for charity with all men. Mr. Hilyard could change his face at will when he wished to personate the sterner emotions in acting and make-believe, but, which is a truly wonderful thing, when he was in earnest, and actually felt those passions of scorn or wrath, his face failed to convey them.

'If,' he said presently, 'the Prince's cause hath pleased Bob Patten, we have got a brave recruit indeed, and are finely sped.'

At which the other plucked up courage, and, setting his band straight, replied :

'I know not, Mr. Hilyard, what may be your present business in the north. I pray

it be honest. Nay, sir,' shrinking and putting up his hand, for Mr. Hilyard made as if he would strike at him with his whip—'nay, sir, remember the cloth! Besides, I meant no harm. Respect the cloth, I pray you, sir! Indeed, I am sure from your company that it must be honest at least, and I hope respectable. Wherefore, all that passed in Oxford may be forgiven.'

'Forgiven!' cried Mr. Hilyard, in a great heat, 'how dare you talk of forgiving? As for all that passed at Oxford, proclaim it aloud an you will; I have no call to be ashamed of it. But if you speak of forgiving, by the Lord I shall forget your sacred profession, and remember only what you were!'

'Gentlemen,' said Tom, speaking with authority, 'let us have no quarrels to-day. Command me, Mr. Patten, if I can serve you in any way. Meanwhile, there will be a bowl of punch towards nine, if your cloth permits.'

'Oh, sir!' replied Mr. Patten, bowing, and spreading his hands. Ah! crocodile! as if thy cloth was ever guard against punch, or any other temptation!

Now that evening was spent in festivity, with singing and drinking, at which none of the gentlemen remained sober except Mr. Hilyard, who helped to carry his patron to bed, and did him the kindly office of loosening his cravat, adjusting his pillows, and pulling off his shoes. I know not if the gentlemen of the north be more prone to drink than those of the south, perhaps not; in either case there was the excuse for these hearty topers that on the next day they were to welcome home the noblest man of them all. And as for Mr. Patten, he slept where he fell. As for me, I went to bed betimes, but not to sleep, for the streets were full of men who went up and down—they were the servants and grooms, and were as loyal and as tipsy as their masters. And when I fell asleep at last, it was to unquiet dreams, in which I was haunted by hoarse voices singing loyal songs.

The morning of the day when I was first to see Lord Derwentwater broke cold and rainy. But as the day advanced the clouds blew over, and we had that rare thing in

February, a bright, cloudless, and sunny day. What mattered a cold and a sharp wind? Northumberland, the brave old county, would show at her best, despite the winter season. Often I think that winter hath charms of its own, especially in the woods, though the poets have resolved on singing the praise of spring and summer. It is true that there are no flowers and few birds; yet when the dead leaves hang, that is, where the trees stand thick, there are all kinds of pleasant colours. One who had travelled much in America once assured Mr. Hilyard that in the autumn and early winter the forests are all ablaze with crimson, yellow and red leaves of the maple tree (from which also he pretends that they make sugar, but one may not believe all traveller's tales). There are places in Northumberland, and especially in the hanging woods beside the Tyne, where this beauty of winter leaves may also be observed. Methinks it is also a beautiful thing to watch the snow upon the branches, each one seeming like a stick of ice, and all together showing like the finest lace of Valenciennes. The contemplation of things beautiful fills the heart with

joy, and raises the mind to heaven ; but we simple women are slow and imperfect of speech ; it needs such a poet as Milton (whom most of all I love, now that youth and joy are past) to put into words the meaning of our thoughts. However, I was glad and thankful that such a day had been vouchsafed for my lord's return, nothing doubting but that his heart, too, would be uplifted on seeing his own woods and towers lying in the light of such a sun and such a clear blue sky.

We observed no order or time in setting forth. Some of the younger gentlemen mounted after breakfast and rode off along the road to Newcastle, intending to meet my lord's party early ; others went off leisurely, proposing to halt at Dilston, two miles or so from Hexham. We, for our part, waited till after dinner, judging that the Earl would not arrive before three o'clock at earliest.

Mr. Patten, whom I disliked from the first, perhaps because Mr. Hilyard regarded him with so much aversion, rode with us. That is to say, he rode beside Mr. Hilyard and behind us, but as if he belonged to our party. This is the way with those who desire to in-

crease their own importance; they pretend to friendship with one man in order to obtain the patronage of another. By riding with Mr. Forster, the man Patten gave himself an excuse for welcoming a nobleman with whom he had no manner of concern or business.

When we had ridden past the bridge at Dilston, where there was a great concourse of people waiting, we left Mr. Patten behind, but we were joined by old Mr. Errington, of Beaufront, a wise and prudent gentleman, whose counsels ought to have guided the party five years later, but he was overruled. We naturally talked of the young Earl.

'I am very sure, Tom,' said Mr. Errington, 'that we have in my lord a pillar of strength. He will be to the loyal gentlemen of the north as much as the Duke of Argyll to the Whigs of Scotland. I have it on the best authority that, although brought up in France, he is an Englishman; though a Catholic, like myself, he is as zealous for liberty as you can be; an adherent of the Prince, yet one who desires not violence, but rather the return of the nation to common-sense and loyalty; one who will conciliate and bind all of us together, so

that we shall become a solid party, and in the end triumph even in the House of Commons.'

This, in the year 1710, was the earnest prayer of all moderate men and those who had much to lose.

'With submission, sir,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'I would ask what advices your honour hath received respecting the temper of London?'

'Nothing, Mr. Hilyard, but what is good. The Queen is well disposed towards her brother; the Tories are confident; there is talk of a peace; the Whigs and Dissenters are terrified. But our time may not come yet.'

'The will of London,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'is the will of the nation.'

'And, if fight we must,' Tom cried, 'the Earl can raise a thousand men.'

'We shall not fight,' said Mr. Errington. 'We will have a bloodless revolution, such a Restoration as that of King Charles II., when he rode from Dover to London through a lane of rejoicing faces. I know not, Mr. Hilyard, that London is so powerful as you would have us believe. But already the country is with us, and the clergy, as in duty bound. And

the most that either party can say of the towns is that they are divided.'

A bloodless Restoration! It was, as I said, the dream of the better sort. But the Catholics forgot the terror of the Smithfield fires, which the people will never forget, from generation to generation, so long as England remains a country. The martyrs have made it impossible for a Papist ever again to rule over us.

'As for us,' said Mr. Errington, 'we know very well, and do not disguise from ourselves, that in the present temper of the people the Prince, when he returns, must choose his Ministers and advisers, not from ourselves, but from his Protestant supporters. Lord Derwentwater may remain his Sovereign's private friend, but can never become a member of his Government. It is to you, Tom, and such as you, that the King must turn.'

'It is what I am always telling Mr. Forster,' said Mr. Hilyard.

Mr. Forster replied, with a blush of satisfaction and the gravity which the subject demanded, that he was very much of Mr. Errington's opinion that, whether he himself should be found competent to become a

Minister or not, a Protestant country must have a Protestant Ministry, and that, begging Mr. Errington's pardon, when the priest walks in, the King and his people fall out.

So we rode along slowly, for the way is none of the best, in such discourse, until about three o'clock or so, and a mile or two beyond Dilston, we heard a great shouting; and pricking our horses, we presently came upon a party of those who had ridden on before. They were now drawn up in a double line, and beyond this, his hat in his hand, my lord himself rode in advance of his party to meet his friends. No prince or sovereign in Europe but would have been moved and gratified by so noble a reception as the young nobleman received from the gentlemen who had thus ridden forth to meet him.

The path at this place is but a beaten track over the turf and level ground south of the river, which is here broad and shallow, with islets and long tongues of sand; there was an old angler in midstream, with rod and fly, careless (or perhaps he was deaf) of what this great shouting might mean, which he seemed not to hear. The ground is flat and

covered with a rough coarse grass; southward rise the gentle hills, clothed with the woods which everywhere, except on the moors and the Cheviots, enrich the landskip of Northumberland, and form its boast. It was on this field that we received my lord.

It is nearly five-and-twenty years ago. If Lord Derwentwater were living, he would now be a man of forty-six, still in the full force and vigour of his manhood. Would he still remember (but he must) that afternoon in February, when, with his hat off, and the setting sun full in his face, making it shine like the face of Moses upon the mountain, he rode through that lane of gentlemen? As for myself, I saw more than I expected in my dreams. He was always the Prince of a fairy story; such as was the Childy Wynd, who transformed the loathly Worm of Spindleston, so was he; or as King Arthur sitting under Dunstanburgh, ever young and glorious, so was he. But the Prince of my dreams was a plain country gentleman, and before me was a gentleman of a kind I had never imagined, more courtly, more handsome, more splendid. There are some men who are called handsome

by reason of a certain uniformity of feature (such as may be carved with a chisel out of a piece of stone); there are many who for a single good feature, a straight nose, the pleasing curve of a mouth, an agreeable smile, a bright eye, may be very justly called pretty fellows. But all alike were agreed in calling Lord Derwentwater the handsomest of men. There are also some men, but very few, to whom has been given that remarkable gift of commanding admiration, of compelling affection, and establishing firm confidence at the very first aspect and appearance of them. Such was my lord. For my own part, I know of no other man of all those who have lived in this eighteenth century, whose face is so well remembered even twenty years and more after his death. Why, there is not a woman, over thirty, within twenty miles of Dilston or Hexham, who, at the mere mention of his name or recollection of his face, doth not instantly fetch a sigh and drop a tear in memory of the handsome lord.

For those who never had the fortune to see him in the flesh, it is necessary to state that his face was full, with features well propor-

tioned ; his nose long and finely cut ; his eyes grey of colour, and large (the large eye, they say, betokens the generous heart); I have myself seen those eyes so full of love, pity, and tenderness, that it makes the memory of them fill my own with tears. His forehead was high and square—Mr. Hilyard says that men with such foreheads, when they are born in humble circumstances, take to study, and become philosophers, theologians, and great scholars, instancing his own forehead as an example, which is broad indeed, but lacking the dignity which sat upon the brow of the young Earl. His chin was round and large—a small chin, or a chin which falls back, says Mr. Hilyard, is a sign of weakness and irresolution ; a deserter, coward, runaway, or informer should be painted with a retreating chin (Mr. Patten's chin was such, which proves the statement). As for my lord's lips, they were firm and well set, yet of the kind which betray passion and agitation of the mind, so that those who knew him well could at all times read in the movements of his lips the emotions of his soul. Every feature in the face, according to Mr. Hilyard, corresponds to

some virtue or defect in the soul. Thus, if one have thick lips, thrust forward, like Mr. Patten, one may be expected to be like him, a self-seeker, chatterer, mischief-maker, and betrayer of honest folk. My lord's complexion was fair, and, before his hair was shaved, his head had been adorned with clusters of brown curls.

In short, the countenance of Lord Derwentwater indicated a soul full of dignity, benevolence, and sweetness. So it looked to me the first time that ever I looked upon it; so it proved to be so long as I knew it; so it seemed to me the last time—oh, most sad and sorrowful time!—that I saw it. There never was any human face in which the great virtues of humanity and kindness were more brightly illustrated than in the face of this young gentleman.

Behind the Earl rode his two brothers, Francis and Charles. The former was of smaller stature than the elder brother, and held his head down as if in thought; but it was his habit to go thus looking upon the ground. When he lifted his eyes one saw that they were strangely sad, and on his

face there rested always a cloud, for which there was no reason save that he was, like his uncle, of a melancholic temperament from his youth upwards ; and his eyes had always a look in them as of one who expects misfortune. Witches say that to men with such a look in their eyes misfortune comes ; it is said that the look of impending misfortune may be read in the eyes of all the Stuarts—the Royal House which the Fates, or rather the Furies, have persecuted with strange malevolence. Can it be that the future of a man may be read in his eyes, as in the palm of his hand? I know not; but Jenny Lee, my maid, the little gipsy witch, dropped strange prophetic hints about these young men, for which I rebuked her, even before she read their hands. As for Charles, the youngest of the three, he was as yet but a lad of sixteen, well-grown and comely ; wore his own brown hair, and was as handsome as his eldest brother, yet in a different way. Those who can read fate in the eyes may have read his sorrows there, but to the rest of us they were brave and merry eyes, belonging to a young man who neither looked for evil nor feared it,

and certainly never anticipated it; a brave, impetuous creature, as full of fancies and whims as any girl, as hot-headed as a Highlander; no lover of books or reading, yet a lad who had a great deal of knowledge, and forgot nothing. As he read so little, one must needs conjecture that he picked up his knowledge as the birds pick up their crumbs, bit by bit from conversation. Thus, though no scholar, he began very soon to be curious about the Roman remains, ancient ruins, and the antiquities of the county, so that he must needs ride over to Chollerford with Mr. Hilyard to see the old bridge and the wall, and discourse with him on moat and tower, and the uses of the wall, as if he had been a great student.

The mud and dust of travel had stained their clothes, but still the three brothers were much more richly dressed than our plain gentlemen, who for the most part wore plain drab or plush coats, with silver buttons, their linen not always of the freshest, their ruffles generally torn, and their wigs undressed. But then there is not much money among these younger sons, so that these things go

unregarded. Nevertheless, I saw more than one looking with envy on the gold-laced hats and the embroidered scarfs of the Earl and his brothers.

Well, there was, to be sure, a great shouting as my lord rode slowly through this lane, shaking hands with every man in turn. He knew the names and families, though not the faces, of all, and could give each a kindly speech, with his Christian name, as if he had been an old friend separated only by a month or two. Presently it came to our turn, and he bowed very low and kissed my hand, saying a pretty thing about the good omen of being welcomed by the beautiful Dorothy Forster, and that if she would extend her friendship to him he should indeed be happy.

'I fear, my lord,' I said, being confused with so much compliment, 'that you take me for my aunt, Lady Crewe.'

'Nay,' he said, 'I take you for no other than yourself; although I know, believe me, of that elder Dorothy, once the flame of my father.'

And then more compliments, which may be omitted, because they were framed in pure

kindness, and intended to please a girl who certainly never had many pretty things said to her before, though she knew very well that many gentlemen, she thought to please her brother, called her the beautiful Dorothy.

My lord had been from infancy at the Court of St. Germain, where, although there were many English gentlemen and their sons, French was commonly talked. He had also had French servants and valets, and lived among a people talking nothing but their own language. It is not, therefore, wonderful that he not only talked French as well as English, but also spoke his own language with a slight foreign accent. This very soon wore off (changing into the Northumberland burr), together with a certain shyness which marked him during the early days when he knew nothing of his friends except by name, and found them, as he afterwards confessed to me, different, indeed, from his expectations; that is to say, less polished in their manners, and more loyal in their friendships. Could a gentleman have higher praise? And is not loyalty better than a fine manner, however well we are pleased with it?

'And this,' said my lord, 'I dare swear, is my cousin, Tom Forster of Bamborough.'

'No other, my lord,' cried Tom heartily, 'and right glad to see you home again.'

Presently all rode back together, the younger men still shouting, and the elders riding soberly behind the Earl, I having the honour of riding on his right hand, and Mr. Errington on his left, while Tom rode with Frank and Charles Radcliffe. It was wonderful to observe how my lord knew all of them, and their private affairs and estates, and their position in the county. Indeed, by his father's orders—his mother caring nothing about such matters—he had been instructed most carefully in the history of Northumberland families. It was an amiable and even a prince-like quality in him, as it had been in his grandfather, Charles II., never to forget the faces of those whom he met. I suppose that, had he chosen to exercise the power, he might also, like his royal cousin, and by right of descent, have touched for the king's evil. Certainly the disloyal usurper, the Duke of Monmouth, did so.

It was now nearly four o'clock, and the

short February day was drawing to a close. But the people who had come so far were not tired of waiting, and we found them all upon the bridge ready to shout their honest greeting. An honest and hearty crowd. Among them were not only some of the Earl's cousins —there was never a Radcliffe without a cloud of cousins—and Lord Widdrington, with his brothers and others of the company from Hexham, but also the tenants and farmers, and a great company of miners, rough and rude fellows, with bristly beards and shaggy coats, who had trudged across the moor from Allendale. They were gathered together on the bridge, with pipers and a drum. When the procession came in sight, you may fancy what a noise, with the music and the shouting, was raised, and what a waving and throwing up of hats, and how the younger men in their joy, after the manner of young men, did beat and belabour one another. The Earl stopped and looked about him. These hundreds were assembled to give him welcome home. It is such a sight as brings the tears into a young man's eyes; it was the first time, perhaps, that he understood his own power; the visible

proof of it dazzled and moved him—remember this, I pray you. Now, had he been brought up among all these people, he would have been familiar with his greatness from the beginning, and so might have grown hardened in heart. as happens to many who come to their estates in boyhood. This was not his case ; and he was ever full of compassion for those who were his tenants, his dependents, and his servants. When the end came he spared them ; he would not lead them out to the destruction which he wrought for himself, and from a mistaken sense of honour, though with a heavy heart. I say, at the sight of these rude and hearty people the tears came into the young Earl's eyes and fell down his cheeks. I, who was nearest to him, saw them, and treasured the memory of them in my heart.

These rude miners. these sturdy farmers, these rough fellows, with their strange speech unfamiliar to him, were his own people, not his serfs and slaves. They were bound to him by no cruel laws of service, as the wretched people of France ; yet, at his bidding, they would rise to a man and follow him. The

Radcliffes were at no time tyrants and oppressors of the poor. From father to son they were always a kindly race, who dealt generously with the people, and reaped their reward in the affection and the loyalty of their tenants and dependents. Perhaps Lord Derwentwater, as he gazed upon the sea of faces, remembered that he might some day bid them take pike and firelock and follow him. I, for one, am ashamed to say that this was in my thoughts ; and so, I am sure, it was in the thoughts of others in the company, who looked on the Earl as nothing but the possible leader of so many hundred men, and the owner of vast wealth, which was to be at the service of the Cause.

Then we rode across the bridge, and so up the steep lane which leads to the great avenue of Dilston Hall, and, beyond the avenue, the bridge across the Devilstone, its water, then foaming white, rushing down the dark and narrow channel between rugged rocks covered with green moss and (but not in March) with climbing plants, and arched over with trees, such as larch, alder, birch, and rowan. Behind us tramped and ran the crowd, all shout-

ing together, with such a tumult as had not been seen since last the Scottish marauders attacked the town of Hexham ; and that was long enough ago, and clean forgotten.

At the doors of the castle the Earl's nearest relations stood ready to receive him. The first to greet him were his aunts, the Ladies Katharine and Mary Radcliffe, the sisters of the late Earl. They were not yet old, as Northumberland counts age, but certainly stricken in years, and perhaps neither of them under fifty. Both were dressed alike, and wore simple black silk frocks, with plain satin petticoats, high stomachers, and a great quantity of lace on their sleeves ; also they had on long white kid gloves, and their hair was carefully dressed in high commodes, on the top of which was more lace, which gave them a nun-like appearance. Everybody knows that they hesitated all their lives whether or no to enter a convent, but in deference to their spiritual adviser remained without those gloomy walls, and yet practised, besides the usual Christian virtues, as to which many ladies of lower rank will not yield to them, the rules of some strict sisterhood, in virtue of

which they rose early, and even in the night, to pray in the chapel, fasted very frequently, and went always in terror whether, by taking an egg on a Friday, or sugar to their chocolate, or cheese in Lent, they were not endangering their precious souls. I laugh not at them, because they lived up to the light of their consciences, and according to the laws laid down by their confessor. Yet I am happy in having had the plain Rule of Life laid down for me by my Prayer Book, the late Lord Bishop of Durham, and, in these recent years, by Mr. Hilyard. I need no confessor, and my conscience is at peace within me, whatever I eat or drink, thereby imitating the example of St. Paul. However, these were great ladies, who thought much of the example they were setting to other women; they were proud and stately in their bearing, yet kind of heart; in appearance they were so much alike that at first one did not distinguish them. Lady Katherine was the elder, and she was perhaps more lined and crossed in the face than her sister.

A pretty sight it was to see these two ladies trembling when their nephews approached,

looking from one to the other of the three gallant young men who stood before them, and turning at length to the tallest and bravest of the three, who stepped forward and bent his knee, kissing their hands, and then kissing their cheeks.

'James,' cried Lady Katherine, 'you are like my father more than your own.'

'Nay, sister,' said Mary, 'he is also like our deceased brother. Nephew, you are welcome home. Stay with your own people; a Radcliffe is best in Northumberland; stay among us, and marry a North Country girl. And these are Frank and Charles. My dears, you are also very welcome. Remember, we are English here, not French.'

So they, too, saluted their aunts, and then Lady Swinburne followed, and after her Sir William, who, as he bade his cousin welcome to his own, loudly expressed the hope that nothing would be attemped by the Earl or his friends which would endanger so noble a head or so great an estate, adding that he knew there were many about who would endeavour to make his lordship a stalking-horse; that he was young as yet, and inexperienced;

and that he commended him to follow the counsels of his father's old friend, Mr. Errington.

To this Lord Widdrington responded with a loud 'Amen' and a profane oath, saying that as for danger, if all who were in the same boat would only pull together, and with a will, there would be no danger.

So, one after the other, all had been presented to the Earl, and we were beginning to wonder what would come next, when we saw the Reverend Mr. Patten stepping forward with an air of great importance. He bowed very low, and said that he had the honour to represent the Protestant Church of England and the clergy of Northumberland. (This shows the pushing, lying nature of the man, who had been in the Vicarage but a few months, and was unknown to the clergy, except that he was once curate at Penrith.) In their name he bade his lordship welcome. Speaking as a High Churchman and Tory, he said that he, in common with most, desired nothing so much as to be delivered of the godless; meaning, I suppose, the Whigs. And that, as for those who wish to transfer

the succession to the House of Hanover, he could say, from his conscience :

> 'Confounded be these rebels all
> That to usurpers bow,
> And make what Gods and Kings they please,
> And worship them below.'

He said a good deal more—being applauded by some and regarded by others as an impertinent intruder. I was pleased to contrast this officiousness with the modesty of Mr. Hilyard, who stood without, not presuming to be presented to my lord, or to address him ; yet, if he had spoken, he would certainly have delivered a very fine discourse, full of Latin quotations and reference to ancient authors.

'I thank you, sir,' said my lord coldly, when this person had quite finished ; 'but for this evening, indeed, we will have nothing of politics or the godless, or of Whigs and Tories.'

This he said partly to rebuke the impertinent zeal of Mr. Patten, and partly to silence certain noisy gentlemen, including the notorious Dick Gascoigne and Jack Hall, who were loudly boasting of what would happen now

that his lordship was at home. One may truly say that there was hardly a moment from the time of the Earl's return when he was allowed to rest in peace, from the day he returned to the day when he left his castle for the last time ; their intention being always to keep before his lordship, and never suffer him to forget, that he was considered the head and chief of the Prince's adherents in the north, and that his approval was taken for granted whatever was hatched. Those who were for open rebellion reckoned that he would join the first rising, whenever and wherever that was attempted, without hesitation ; as for those who were for patience and making the party strong, they knew that they could depend upon him. In reality, however, it was perfectly well understood that the Earl desired above all things, and was desired by the leading men of the party, to keep himself retired and apart from politics until the time came when, like an important piece in the game of chess, he could move with the best effect.

It would have been more consonant with his ambition had he been born a mere private

gentleman, able to live out his days in peace, and in the exercise of good works. But then, as Mr. Hilyard truly said, it is not every great man who is suffered by his friends, like Diocletian, after making Rome the metropolis of the whole world, by a voluntary exile to retire himself from it, and to end his days in his own secluded villa, a gardener and private gentleman in Dalmatia; or like Scipio, to build his house in the midst of a wood. Lord Derwentwater would have imitated this great Roman had it been permitted. It is, however, the misfortune of the great that the grandeur and eminence of their state will not permit them to taste for long the felicities of a private life.

'An earl's coronet in unquiet times,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'is like unto a king's crown. Few of them are so soft lined but they sit heavy on the wearer's brow.'

When my lord and his brothers retired to change their travelling-dress, Colonel Radcliffe invited the whole company to a supper, or banquet, which would be shortly served in the great hall. This was, of course, expected. Presently the brothers returned, dressed in a

fashion suitable to their rank. The Earl had now a peach-coloured satin coat, lined with white, a flowered silk waistcoat, a crimson scarf, white silk stockings, and red-heeled shoes with diamond buckles. He gave his hand to his aunt, Lady Katharine. Lord Widdrington followed with Lady Mary, Francis Radcliffe with Lady Swinburne, Charles with Madam Errington, and Sir William with myself, and the rest after us in due order and such precedence as their age and rank allowed.

I think there never was a more joyful banquet than this ; perhaps the cooks were not equal to those of Paris, but I am sure that by the guests nothing better could have been desired or expected. Of ladies there were only the five I have named. I was pleased to observe at the bottom of the table Mr. Hilyard, who was proposing to retire, as, not being a gentleman of the county or by birth, he was right in doing; but Colonel Radcliffe, who knew him well, insisted on his coming in, and placed him at the table beside himself.

It was Mr. Errington who asked the gentle-

men to drink a bumper to the health of his lordship. He reminded those present who were of his own age that it was already twenty years since a Radcliffe had lived in Dilston Hall, and more than that length of time since so large a company had met together under its roof. He then spoke of the young Earl's education, and averred his belief that, though brought up in France, he had remained an Englishman at heart, and had brought from that country nothing but the politeness of its nobles and the gallantry of its people—qualities, he said, which, added to the courage of the English bulldog and his own generous nature as a true Radcliffe, could not but command the affections and respect of all. He would have said more, but the gentlemen would listen no longer, and, springing to their feet, drained their glasses, and shouted so that it did your heart good to hear them. I am quite sure there was never a hypocrite or pretender among them all (save Mr. Patten), so hearty and so unfeigned was their joy to receive this comely and gallant gentleman among them.

'Gentlemen,' said his lordship, when they

suffered him at length to speak, and when his voice returned to him, for he was choked almost with the natural emotion which was caused by so much heartiness—'Gentlemen, I know not how to thank you sufficiently; indeed, I have no words strong enough for my thanks. I am an untried stranger, and you treat me as a proved friend. Yet we are kith and kin; we are cousins all; our ancestors stood shoulder to shoulder in many a Border fight; so let us always stand together. And as for what my cousin, Sir William, said just now, it is truly the wish of the Prince that no rash or ill-considered enterprise be taken in hand.'

Then he sat down, saying no more, for he was a man of few words. And, while the gentlemen shouted again, the ladies left the board, and went away to talk by themselves about his lordship and his two brothers.

Meantime, outside, the common sort, unmindful of the cold, were regaling themselves in their own way, having a barrel or two of strong ale broached, and a great fire, where an ox was roasting whole, the very smell of the beef being a banquet to many poor souls

who seldom taste flesh, unless it be the flesh of swine, and that in great lumps of fat, which they sometimes eat with bread and sometimes soak in hot milk, Providence having bestowed upon this class of people stomachs stronger than those of gentlefolk.

'In all times,' saith Mr. Hilyard, 'roast-beef has been in great scarcity, insomuch that in Homer the gods are represented as pleased by the fragrance or perfume of the roasting meat. And, if the very gods, how much more the common people! A morsel of bread dipped in oil, and a fig or a bunch of grapes, made their only meal for the day. As for swine's flesh, that they never so much as tasted. When the Crusaders occupied the Holy Land (where they founded the Latin Kingdom, which they thought would last for ever), leprosy broke out among them, which they attributed to the eating of pork. But I know not if that was indeed the case.'

Certainly, to a Northumbrian nose, there is no smell more delicious than that of a piece of roasting beef, and these good fellows were sitting patiently about the fire until the ox should be cooked through. Some there were,

it is true, who, miscalculating their strength of head, took so many pulls at Black Jack that they rolled over, and had to be carried into the kitchen and laid on the floor, so that they went supperless to bed. This was a pity, because his lordship did not give a roasted ox every day in the year, and to lose your share in a great feast is a dreadful thing for a poor man, and one thrown in his teeth all his life afterwards.

When Lord Derwentwater left his guests, which was early, because he never loved deep potations, he went outside to speak with his humble friends round the bonfire. They were at the moment engaged upon the beef, which was good but underdone, and in their best and most cheerful mood. He went among them shaking them by the hand, asking their names, kissing the young women, promising to call at their houses and farms, bidding the lads bustle about with the beer, promising to help them if he could be of any help, laughing at himself for understanding their speech slowly, and all with so hearty and easy a grace as to make the poor folk feel that truly a friend had come to them at last across the seas.

The housekeeper, good Mrs. Busby, who had waited for him day and night for twenty years, found beds for the ladies and for some of the gentlemen. But most of them slept where they fell, and in the morning, by dint of cold water poured upon the head, and small-beer within, recovered their faculties before they rode away.

Before I went up the great staircase to bed, I looked into the hall. It was already very late—nearly eleven. The gentlemen were drinking still, and some of them were smoking pipes of tobacco, while some were very red in the face, and some had fallen asleep—their heads hanging downwards and quite helpless and sad to see, or else lolling back upon the chair with open mouth like an idiot, or lying on the table upon their arms. Strong drink had stolen away their brains, and for twelve hours they would be senseless. Among those who slept in their chairs was none other than his reverence, Mr. Robert Patten. A shameful spectacle! His great mouth was wide open, his head lying back, and some wag with a burnt cork had marked his upper lip and cheeks with the black moustachios and

ferocious whiskers borne—I am told—by certain soldiers of a fierce and warlike nation called Heyducs. Why, it is a venial thing for a layman, one who has, perhaps, ridden and hunted for a whole day, to be overcome with thirst and potency of drink; but for a clergyman, one whose thoughts should be set upon holy things and the mysteries of the Christian scheme—faugh! the sight is sorrowful indeed. One may remember many evil things in the life of Mr. Patten, but few more disgraceful than his tipsy senselessness at Lord Derwentwater's return.

How different was Mr. Antony Hilyard! He was not drunk, nor, apparently, touched with wine. But his jolly red face was beaming with smiles. On one side of him sat Colonel Radcliffe, who had forgotten his invisible enemy, and was now laughing and listening; on the other side was Charles Radcliffe, not drinking, but looking curiously around him, and especially at the singer, as, with glorified face, bright eyes, and brandished glass, as if life was to him a dream of pure happiness without a care or a fear, he sang merrily—men are like children, tickled with a straw,

but yet it is a catching air—his famous song :

'I am a jolly toper, I am a ragged Soph,
Known by the pimples on my face with taking bumpers off;
And a-toping we will go—we will go—we will go—
And a-toping we will go.'

CHAPTER VIII.

A PRINCE IN ISRAEL.

So the next day to Blanchland, a ride of nine miles across a moor as wild as any in England; and Tom glum, partly on account of last night's wine and partly at prospect of a whole year spent in this secluded spot.

'Consider, sir,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'the advantages of the plan. First, it will be impossible to spend any money——'

Here Tom flung into a rage, and swore that it was shameful for the owner of Bamborough to want for a little money.

'Next,' continued the judicious steward, 'your honour will have most excellent shooting and fishing; and as for society——'

'I know all your songs,' said Tom. 'Can you not write some more?'

'As for society, there are my lord and his

brothers within an easy ride. Your honour doth very well understand that it may be both a singular advantage for yourself to enjoy the friendship of a nobleman who hath the Prince's private car, and to his lordship to have the benefit of your experience and advice in the conduct of his private affairs. As for that, I conceive it nothing short of a Providential interposition that, at the moment when he should arrive, inexperienced and raw, he should find in your honour a wise adviser.'

'That is true, Tony,' said Tom, looking more cheerful. 'Dilston Hall is not ten miles from Blanchland, and the wine is good. We will teach him how to drink it. These Frenchmen cannot drink.'

'And to mix whisky punch. In France they do not even know the liquor.'

'Poor devils!' said Tom. 'His lordship has much to learn.'

But as Lord Derwentwater was for the next six months entirely occupied with the survey of his own estates, not only in Northumberland, but also in Lancashire and Cumberland, we saw nothing of him, and spent

our time without any company other than our own. Mr. Patten, it is true, was sometimes so kind as to ride across the moor from Allenhead, and by a coarse flattery (call it rather an abject surrender of his judgment), compared with which Mr. Hilyard's method was fine and delicate, he acquired an influence over Tom which afterwards did great harm. Certainly it was a quiet summer which we spent, and had Tom been content I should have been happy. Fortunately, her ladyship was pleased, and signified her pleasure in plain terms.

'"I design not,"' she wrote, '"that my nephew should live other than a gentleman of his name and position ought. But I am well pleased that you are for a space removed from the company of those who lead you into wasteful courses with horse-racing and wagers"'—Tom had been of late unfortunate—'"of which it is now well-nigh time to have done. It is my lord's earnest desire that you should shortly take the place which becomes your family, and, on the retirement of your father, that you should represent the county in his

stead. As this cannot be done without expense, and as we learn that your father is not willing to undertake the charge, having his second family to consider, it is the intention of my lord to make an annual allowance out of his Northumberland estates, such as may suffice for your maintenance in style befitting a gentleman. This generosity, I beg you to believe, is unasked by me, though I confess that he knows very well the solicitude with which I watch the welfare of my nephew. To be guided, as well as to be assisted, by so great and good a man, should be considered by you an honour." '

'This,' said Mr. Hilyard, who was reading the letter, 'is the first-fruit of that intention which I foretold six months ago.'

'Ay,' said Tom, 'always at her ladyship's apron. But go on. Has she any more advice? Am I to ask the Bishop permission to take a glass of whisky punch? Will he give me leave to hunt upon the moor? 'Tis all his.'

'He who hath patience,' replied Mr. Hilyard, 'hath all. Ladies' leading-strings

stretch not all the way from Durham to St. Stephen's. I proceed with the letter :

'"I desire next to inform you that my Lord the Bishop hath a great desire to converse with Lord Derwentwater, and that in a private and quiet manner which will give no opportunity for malicious tongues. A Bishop of the English Church cannot openly visit a Catholic peer, nor should he invite scandal and malignant whispers by entertaining in his own house so close a friend and so near a relation of the Prince. He wishes, therefore, that you should invite a hunting-party to Blanchland in October, at which he, too, unless otherwise prevented, will be present. Among your guests be sure that Lord Derwentwater is present. So no more at present. Give Dorothy, your sister, my blessing and that of the Bishop, and tell Mr. Hilyard, your steward, that I expect thrift in household charges while you are at Blanchland.

'"Your loving Aunt,

'"Dorothy Crewe."'

To be sure, it was impossible to spend money at this quiet place, where there were

no gentlemen to make matches, play cards, and lay bets, no market-town nearer than Hexham, no buying of horses, and no other people except ourselves and the hinds who tilled our lands. There is certainly nowhere in England a place which lies so remote from human habitation, unless it be in Allendale or among the Cheviots, as this old ruined Tower of Blanchland. Formerly it was a monastery, but was destroyed very long ago, in the reign of the first Edward, by a party of marauding Scots, and was never afterwards rebuilt. They say that the marauding Scots, who had crossed the Border with sacrilegious intent to sack this House of God, on account of its reputed wealth, had lost their way upon the moor in a mist, and were returning homeward disappointed, when they heard the monastery bell ringing close at hand—it was to call the good monks together for a *Te Deum* on account of their escape from the enemy whose coming was looked for. Alas! the bell was a knell, and the *Te Deum* a funeral chant, for the ringing guided the robbers to the spot, and they quickly broke through the gates, murdered all the monks,

set fire to the buildings, and rode away carrying their unhallowed spoil with the sacred vessels, driving the monks' cattle before them, and leaving behind them nothing but the unburied corpses of the unfortunate brothers. Surely some dreadful vengeance must have overtaken these men; but it is so long ago that the memory of their names as well as their punishment has long since perished, though that of the crime has survived.

Blanchland lies along the valley of the Derwent in a deep hollow about the middle of the great moor called Hexhamshire Common, and ten or eleven miles south of Hexham; the stream is here quite little and shallow, babbling over pebbles and under trees; it is crossed by the stout old stone bridge built by the monks themselves, who once farmed the valley. The fields are now tilled by a few hinds who live about and around the quadrangle of the old monastery still marked by the ancient walls, behind which the rustics have built their cottages. The place has the aspect of an ancient and decayed college, the quadrangle having been neatly cobbled, and a pant of clear water erected by my great-great-

grandfather, Sir Claudius, who died here in the year 1627. Our own dwelling-house consisted of two buildings; one, which we used for company and visitors, is first, a great square tower which stands over the ancient gate—Mr. Hilyard says that the place might easily have been held for weeks against simple moss-troopers—it has several good rooms in it; and the second a part of the old monastery, including the refectory, a fair and noble hall, with a large kitchen below, and beside it a small modern house, contrived either by Sir Claudius or some previous holder, within another ancient square tower. This house, very convenient in all respects, has a stone balcony on the north side, from where stone steps lead to the green meadow, which was once the monks' burying-place. The ruins of their chapel, an old roofless tower and the walls, are standing in the meadow. Within the old chapel grass grows between the flags, wallflowers flourish upon the walls; there is on one of the stones a figure and an inscription, which Mr. Hilyard interpreted to be that of a certain man once Forester to the Abbey. But not a monument or a stone to the memory of the dead monks.

They are gone and forgotten—names, and lives, and all—though their dust and ashes are beneath the feet of those who stand there. Bush and bramble grow round the chapel and cover the old graves, whose very mounds have now disappeared and are level with the turf. Among them rises an old stone cross, put up no one knows when. It is truly a venerable and ghostly place. In the twilight or moonlight one may see, or think he sees, the ghosts of the murdered friars among the ruins. In the dark winter evenings, the people said, they could be heard, when the wind was high, chaunting in the chapel; and every year, on that day when they rang the fatal bell and so called in the Scots, may be heard at midnight the ringing of a knell. Many are there who can testify to this miracle; and at night the venerable ghost of the Abbot himself may be sometimes met upon the bridge. But this may be rumour, for the people of the place are rude, having no learning at all, little religion, but great credulity, and prone to believe all they hear. Certainly I have never myself met the Abbot's ghost, though I have often stood upon the bridge after nightfall

alone or with Mr. Hilyard. On the other hand, I have heard, on windy nights, the chaunting of the dead monks very plainly. While we were there I heard so many ghost-stories that I began to suspect something wrong, and presently was not astonished to find that the number and dreadful, fearful aspect of the ghosts had greatly increased since we came to the place, insomuch that for years after (and no doubt until now) the simple people of the village, if it may be called a village, were frightened out of their lives if they had but to cross the quadrangle or fetch water at the pant after sunset. The cause of this terror was no other than my maid, Jenny Lee, who saw these apparitions. I verily believe that she invented her stories out of pure mischief and wantonness, spreading abroad continually tales of new ghosts. One day she saw in the graveyard a skull with fiery eyes, which grinned at her. Another evening she met the Devil himself (she declared; but his honour and Miss Dorothy must be told nothing about it—artful creature!), with flames coming out of his mouth, and a great roaring, sure to bring mischief, if only the loss of a chicken or

a sucking-pig, to some one. Another time there was a black dog, which portended death. Had I known of these things at the time, Jenny should soon, indeed, have gone a-packing. But I did not know till later on, when Mr. Hilyard inquired into the truth of these stories, and traced them all to this girl.

We passed here a quiet time during the spring and summer of that year. In the morning Tom went a-fishing, or hunted the otter, or went after badgers, or some kind of vermin, of which there are great quantities on the moor. After dinner he commonly slept. After supper he drank whisky punch, and to bed early. As for me, when my housewife duties were accomplished, I talked with the women-folk, who were simple and ignorant, but of good hearts ; or walked up the valley along the south side, where there is a high sloping bank, or hill—to my mind very beautiful. It is covered with trees. By the middle of June these trees have put on their leaves, and among the leaves are the pink blossoms of the blueberries and the white flowers of the wild strawberry, to say nothing of the wild flowers which clothe the place in that month

as with a carpet. Even thus, in June, must have looked the Garden of Eden. In the afternoon Mr. Hilyard read to me, and we held converse in low whispers while Tom slept. And on Sunday morning the villagers came together, and Mr. Hilyard read the service appointed for the day. It was in June that Lord Derwentwater rode across the moor to visit us. We found that the shyness which he showed on his first return had gone altogether, being replaced by the most charming courtesy and condescension to all ranks. He had also begun to acquire the North-country manner of speech, and could converse with the common people. On his progress, if so it may be called, he was received everywhere with such joy that he was astonished, having as yet done nothing to deserve it.

'The gentlemen of Northumberland,' he declared, 'are the most hospitable in the whole world, and the women are the most beautiful—yes, Miss Dorothy, though they are but as the moon compared with one sun which I know. As for the moors'—he had just ridden across Hexhamshire Common from Allendale to Blanchland on his way home to

Dilston—'as for the moors, the air is certainly the finest in the world.'

Then he told us of his travels, the people he had met with, and the things he had done and was going to do. He would enlarge Dilston; he would rebuild Langley; he would build a cottage on the banks of Derwentwater, where his ancestors once had a great house; here he would build boats, and then, with his friends, would float upon the still waters among the lovely islands of the lake, and listen to the cooing of the doves in the woods, or to the melodious blowing of horns upon the shore. This, he said, would be all the Heaven he would ask if I was there to sit beside him in his boat. Alas! Every taste that most adorns the age was possessed by this young nobleman, and especially those truly princely tastes which desire the erection of stately buildings, the gathering of friends to enjoy his wealth, and the society of beautiful women. We ought not to reproach men with weakness on this score, seeing that all the best and noblest of mankind—and chiefly those—have loved women's society.

Among other things that pleased him beside

the universal welcome which he received, was that when he went into Lancashire—it is so small a trifle that it should not, perhaps, be mentioned—they made him Mayor of Walton. One would hardly suppose that it was worthy of the dignity of so great a lord to be pleased with so small a thing. Yet he was, and, just as Tom and his friends loved to drink and laugh, and Mr. Hilyard (but of an evening only) to sing and act, and play the buffoon, so Lord Derwentwater himself was not free from what we may call, without irreverence, a besetting infirmity of his sex, and a blemish upon the character of many great men—I mean this love of tomfooling. Now, the Corporation of Walton is nothing in the world but a club of gentlemen held in a village of that name near Preston. Every member of the Club held an office. The Mayor has a Deputy, to take the chair in his absence. There are also in this foolish society a Recorder, two Bailiffs, two Serjeants, a Physician, a Mace-bearer, a Poet Laureate, and a Jester.

This burlesque of serious institutions appeared to Lord Derwentwater, and no

doubt to the other members of the Club, a most humorous stroke; he laughed continually over their doings and sayings with Tom; and, in fact, so tickled him with the thing that the very next year he took the journey with the Earl to Preston, and there was elected into the Club, and honoured with the office of Serjeant, while Mr. Hilyard, always to the front where fooling and play-acting were concerned, was made at once both Poet Laureate and Jester, which offices were happily vacant for him. It is said that the verses he wrote, the jests he made, and the songs he sung, were worthy of being added to Mr. Brown's 'Miscellaneous Works,' or Mr. D'Urfey's 'Pills to Purge Melancholy;' but, unfortunately, the records of the Society perished in the disasters of the year 1715, and with them Mr. Hilyard's verses.

One may easily excuse this levity in Lord Derwentwater, when one remembers that he and all his companions were as yet in their earliest manhood, before the vivacity of youth has vanished. Tom, the eldest, was but six-and-twenty; Lord Derwentwater himself, the youngest, only twenty-one; all of them

honest country gentlemen and their younger brothers, and none, as yet, sated with the pleasures of the wicked town. How were the younger sons, for instance, to find money for the pleasures of town? I cannot pretend that all these young gentlemen were virtuous, or, in all their amusements, innocent; certainly, a good many of them were frequently drunk. But still they were all young, and one feels that a young man may sin out of mere youthful joy, and then repent; while an old man, if he sins it is hardness of heart. And, being young, they were full of spirits.

'Solomon,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'teaches that a merry heart doeth good like medicine. Also he reminds us that a merry head maketh a cheerful countenance, and, further, that he who is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. Wherefore, Miss Dorothy, let not this laughter of his honour, my patron, and Lord Derwentwater trouble you.'

Why, it could not trouble one if the causes of their mirth could have been understood. But it is of no use to talk of these things. Women sit with quiet faces, though their hearts are glad; but men must needs be

laughing. Besides, Solomon has said so much about fools and their mirth as to make one afraid, lest, by laughing over-much, one may be confounded with these fools.

Then began my lord to come often to Blanchland, and I to enjoy the most happy six months of my life. Only six months! Yet, all that went before and all that came after are to be counted as nothing compared with that brief period of happiness. He would come over in the morning, when Tom was abroad, and hold conversation with me, either walking or in the old refectory where we sat. We talked of many things which I have not forgotten, but cannot write down all I remember. Sometimes Mr. Hilyard was with us, and sometimes we were alone. We conversed upon high and lofty themes, as well as on little things of the moment. Once, walking among the ruins of the monks' chapel, I had the temerity—or perhaps the ill-breeding—to venture on asking him how it came about that a man of his knowledge and penetration could continue in the fold of the Roman Catholic Church.

He was not angry at the question, as might

be expected (which shows his goodness of heart), but laughed, and said that he remained a Catholic because no one had yet succeeded in converting the Pope.

'Fair Doctor of Divinity,' he added; 'do not tempt me. There is nothing I would not willingly do for the sake of your *beaux yeux*; but ask not a thing which touches my honour. Loyalty I owe to my Church as much as to my King. My cousin Dorothy would not surely advise a Radcliffe against his honour.'

This question of his religion dwelt in my lord's mind, and he returned to it on another occasion, saying very seriously that Protestants were unhappy in knowing none of the repose and ease of soul which belong to those who hold what he called the True Faith.

'For,' he said, 'either they are perplexed by doubts and always drifting into new heresies, or they are painfully striving, each for himself, and unaided, to attain his own safety, or they are guided by one or other of the heretic doctors to their irreparable loss; whereas we,' he added, 'live free from doubts. The Church hath settled all doubts long ago; she orders, and we obey; she

teaches, and we believe; we have no reason for proving anything; we live without fear, and when at length we die,' he took off his hat, 'we are fortified by the last consolations and tender offices of the Church, and borne away by ministering angels, some to Heaven, but of these not many; the rest to the expiating fires of Purgatory. Fair cousin, I would that you, too, were in this fold with me!'

I was silenced, for the grave eyes and earnest voice of his lordship awed my soul. I knew not, indeed, what to answer until I consulted with Mr. Hilyard. In thinking over what my lord had said, his picture of faith seemed fair indeed.

'Why,' said Mr. Hilyard, when I spoke of it to him, 'that is true enough; but, Miss Dorothy, remember that you, too, have a Church which teaches, orders, and consoles. Where are the doubts of which his lordship speaks? I know of none, for my own part; nor do you. And for us, as well as the Papists, surely there are the Sacraments of the Church, without the fires of Purgatory.'

Thus easily is a Papist answered by a man of learning.

But to Lord Derwentwater I only made reply, meekly, that I was an ignorant girl and presumptuous in speaking of such things; whereas, if he would take counsel with Lord Crewe or with Mr. Hilyard—but upon this he fell a-laughing.

'What, cousin,' he said, 'would you have me take the opinion of a jester, paid to make merriment for his master, and a singer of bacchanalian and dissolute songs for a company of drunken revellers? Nay, Miss Dorothy; I know that he is thy friend, and I speak not to make thee angry; and, in sober moments, I confess that I have found him a person of learning and wisdom. But in things spiritual —think of it! As for Lord Crewe, I have heard that he is an excellent statesman, venerable for rank and years, and most benevolent in character; but I have never heard that he is a great theologian, or to be named in the same breath as the Fathers of the Church. And if he were, I have not myself the learning or the wit to examine and prove the very foundation of religion, or to be sure of getting a new faith if I cast away my present one, or finding belief

through disbelief, or to hope for greater ease than at present I enjoy.'

So no more was said at the time between them of Popery or matters of religion; as for matters political, naturally there was much talk, especially when letters and papers arrived from London with intelligence. The affairs of the French King were going badly; as Englishmen we could not but rejoice, therefore. Yet the hopes of the Prince, so far as they rested on France, were decaying fast, wherefore we must be sorry; yet again, as if to put us in heart, it was reported that London was growing daily more favourable to the lawful Sovereign.

'What London is, my lord,' said Mr. Hilyard, ever anxious to glorify his native town, 'that is the country. London deserted Richard II., and he fell; London joined Edward IV., and the Lancastrians' cause was lost; it was London which deposed King Charles and sent King James a-packing. Yet the passions of the mob are fickle; we know them not. To-day they bawl for the Chevalier; to-morrow they will throw up their caps for the Protestant religion, and will plunder a

Catholic Ambassador's house. It hath been well observed that the mob is like Tiberius, who, to one beginning, "You remember, Cæsar?" replied, "Nay; I do not remember what I was."'

'We are a long way from Cæsar,' said the Earl. 'Let us, however, have no secret conspiracies and dark plots. There have been too many such already. It is not by treason that we shall bring back the King; but by the voice of the people. Never shall it be said that I, for one, dragged men from their homes to fight for their Prince, unless it was first made clear that the country was wholly for him.'

'If London speaks, the nation will follow,' Mr. Hilyard repeated.

'When the country gentry agree to rise,' said Tom, 'the thing is as good as done.'

'Then let nothing be done,' Lord Derwentwater added, 'till the voice of the country is certain, and the gentlemen of the country can be depended upon. As for French bayonets, we want none of them. And for premature risings, let us countenance none of them, nor

have to do with those who would bring them about. Say I well, Tom Forster?'

'Excellently well, my lord,' Tom replied; though he was already, I now believe, in some kind of correspondence with those arch-conspirators, Dick Gascoigne and Captain Talbot. But let these words be remembered, because, in the sequel, it will be seen that they fell into Tom's heart and remained there, bringing forth fruit.

The summer passed away with such discourse. The hunting-party was fixed for October the 30th. Mr. Hilyard, following her ladyship's instructions, designed to make it a small and private party; but when it was known that the illustrious Lord Crewe, with his wife, would be present, there came so many promises of attendance, that order had to be taken for a very great quantity of provisions, the arrangement for which cost myself and Jenny Lee many a long day's work. On the 29th, the Bishop and Lady Crewe rode from Bishop's Auckland, a distance of twenty miles, over rough country ways—a long ride for a man between seventy and eighty years of age. When we heard

that they were visible from the hill, Tom and I went forth to meet them, and led them from the bridge to the porch.

When Lady Crewe, whom then I saw for the first time since a little child, dismounted, I perceived, though she was wrapped in a great thick hood covering her from head to foot, that she had brown curling hair like my own, and dark eyes of a singular brightness, which my own also somewhat resembled, and that she was of the same height, though stouter, then being about the age of forty.

'So,' she said to Tom, 'thou art my nephew and my coheir. Kiss my cheek, Tom. We shall have a great deal to say.'

Then Tom assisted the Bishop to dismount.

'Welcome, my lord,' he said, 'to your own house and Manor of Blanchland.'

'As for its being mine own, Nephew Forster,' said his lordship, 'thou must ask thy aunt. She will not willingly let Bamborough and Blanchland go to a Crewe.'

Then we led them within, and I received my aunt's gloves and muff, after kindly greet-

ings from her; but I observed that her eyes followed Tom.

I would have knelt to the Bishop for his blessing, but he raised me, saying kindly:

'Let me see thy face, Miss Dorothy the younger. Why—so—there are Forsters still, I see. Wife, here is the living picture of a certain maid with whom I fell in love twenty years ago. Thou art not so beautiful in my eyes, child, as thy aunt; but I doubt not there are plenty who——'

'He hath the face of Ferdinando,' cried my aunt, speaking of Tom, 'and the voice of poor Will. But perhaps most he favours my father, Sir William.'

'She is very like all these, my dear,' said Lord Crewe, looking earnestly at me. 'Child, when I look upon thy face I see my own Dorothy again, in her first beauty. Yet she is always the most beautiful woman in the world to me. And every age with her will bring its own charm.'

'He has the manner of my own branch, not the Etherston Forsters,' my lady continued. 'Tom, you must come with me to London before you go into the House. I

shall present you to Lady Cowper, our cousin' (she was a Clavering). 'She is a rank Whig, but a woman of fashion and, what is better, of sense and virtue. Sense and virtue go together. Dorothy, child, though some people will have it otherwise.'

Lord Crewe bestowed upon Tom a passing glance, which showed me that he was less interested than his wife in the male Forsters.

'My dear,' he said, 'if your nephew is wise he will ask for the society of no other woman than yourself while he is in London.'

Lord Crewe loved his wife so fondly that these compliments were but expressions of his tenderness. Most old men dote on their young wives: not so Lord Crewe. His passion, old as he was, was that of strong manhood, a steady and ardent flame which every woman should desire, one which causes the care and thoughtfulness of the lover to remain long after the honeymoon, and, indeed, throughout the earthly course. Never was there any example more truly illustrating the virtue and happiness of conjugal love than that of Lord Crewe and his wife.

When she had removed her travelling attire,

and appeared, her hair dressed in a *fontange* with Colberteen lace, her silk dress looped to show the rich petticoat beneath, the lace upon her sleeve, her gold chain, and, above all, the surpassing dignity of her carriage and beauty of her face (though now in her fortieth year), I owned to myself that I had never before seen a lady so stately or so truly handsome, or so completely becoming her exalted rank as the wife either of an English bishop or an English baron.

'What are thy thoughts, child?' she asked, smiling, because I am sure she knew very well what they were.

'Madam,' I replied, with respect, 'I was but thinking how the people everywhere, not only the gentlefolk but the common folk, and not only at Bamborough, but here and at Alnwick and everywhere, speak still of the beautiful Dorothy Forster—and that now I know at length what they mean.'

'Tut, tut!' she replied, but she laughed and blushed—she had still the fairest complexion ever seen, and the clearest skin (for the sake of her complexion she would never drink beer, and washed in cold water all the year round),

and a colour, white and red, which came and went like a girl's; her teeth were of a pearly white—women of forty are sometimes lamentable to look upon, so bad have their teeth become—with a mouth and rosy lips which seemed still young; her face was round rather than oval; her eyes were large and dark, as I have said; her hair was piled in a low tower, and covered with laces; her sloping shoulders were also half-hidden by a lace mantle, and she had the most dainty figure ever seen. Truly a Juno among women, who had been the chief of the Graces in her youth.

'Tut, tut!' she replied, tapping my cheek with her fan, but yet well pleased. 'Silly child! Beauty is but for a day. We women have our little summer of good looks. A few years and it is over. I am an old woman now. But you, my dear, may look into the glass and see there what your aunt was like when she, like you, was nineteen years of age.'

Then we sat down to supper, Mr. Hilyard being first presented. He would have absented himself altogether, being modest and much afraid of the Lord Bishop; but my lady asked

for him, and was good enough to insist upon his presence. Conversation was grave and serious, chiefly sustained by the Bishop, Mr. Hilyard saying never a word, but keeping his eyes on the table, and mightily relieved when at nine his lordship begged to be excused, on the ground that they had travelled far, and that now he was old and must to bed betimes.

'You have put us in the haunted chamber, Dorothy,' said Lady Crewe. 'It was there that Sir Claudius died. When I was a child, I looked every day after dark for his ghost. But it never came. Yes, Blanchland is a strange, ghostly place. The people used to speak of terrible things.'

The Bishop gave her his hand.

'Come, my dear,' he said. 'I engage to drive away any ghosts that come to disturb your sleep.'

Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, of Stene, in Northamptonshire, and Bishop of Durham, was at this time seventy-seven years of age, which we rightly consider a very great age indeed. There were in him, however, none of the infirmities of age; his walk was as firm, his eye was as clear, his voice as vigorous, his

seat on horseback as steady, as in most men at fifty. In appearance he was most singular. For he wore his own hair, and not a wig; this was long, and abundant, and perfectly white; on his upper lip was a small whisker or moustache; he always had upon his head a little velvet cap; he was, in person, tall and spare; in his carriage, he stooped somewhat, a fine, scholarly habit, as caused by much reading and meditation; his eyes were black and piercing; his nose was straight and clear; his lips were set firm; and his chin was long and pointed. Those who have seen the portrait of Charles I., may be informed that Lord Crewe's face somewhat resembled that of the sainted monarch.

He was a younger son of Lord Crewe, of Stene, in Northamptonshire, but, by the death of his elder brothers, he succeeded, in his fiftieth year, to the title. He was, in early life, a distinguished scholar of Lincoln College, Oxford, and was elected a Fellow of that venerable Foundation during the Protectorate, but declared for Crown and Hierarchy in 1660. He was made Rector of his College, Dean of Chichester, and Clerk of the

Closet to King Charles II. In the year 1671, he was consecrated Bishop of Oxford, and two years later was translated to the See of Durham, which he held for fifty years, the longest episcopate, I believe, in the history of the Church of England.

No one is ignorant that this prelate incurred great odium during the reign of King James II. for his support of that monarch's measures. I am not obliged to defend or to accuse his action while he was on the Ecclesiastical Commission; and to those who charge him with the prosecution of Dr. Samuel Johnson, of the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, with his famous offer to attend publicly the entry of the Pope's Nuncio into London, and with his conduct in the case of Magdalen College, Oxford, the writer has nothing at all to say, because she is a simple woman, and these things are too high for her. It is true that in 1688 he was exempted from pardon, and had to take flight across the seas ; yet, which shows that his enemies had nothing they could bring home to him, he presently came back and remained unmolested until his death—that is to say, for five-and-twenty

years. He was so good a man, and of so truly kind a heart, that one cannot believe he ever did or said a wrong thing. Certainly he never changed his principles, upholding Divine Right and the lawful succession of the Stuarts, and making no secret of his doctrines. As becomes a bishop, however, he took no active share in the affairs of the party, except in this very year of grace, namely 1710, when he opposed the prosecution of Dr. Sacheverell. And his last words to his chaplain when he died, full of years, in 1722, were, 'Remember, Dick, never go over to the other side.'

As for his wealth, he possessed as Lord Crewe, his estates and the ancestral seat of Stene, with other manors and houses, in Northamptonshire. As Lord Bishop of Durham, he enjoyed the revenues and the powers of a Prince Palatine, with six splendid castles, including Durham, Auckland, and Norham, and eight great houses. He mostly kept his Court (for truly it was little less) at Durham, where he entertained in the year 1677 the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth, on his way to the north. A magnificent

prelate, indeed; with the courage to declare and uphold his opinions; splendid in his carriage, his language, his dress, and in the liveries of his servants; one who ruled himself, his household, and his diocese with a firm hand; who spent freely, yet administered prudently; was affable to all except to those who would dispute his authority or his rank.

'And now, Tony,' said Tom, when they were gone, 'we cannot sing with a bishop in the house; but we can drink. The lemons, brave boy, and the whisky. Methinks her ladyship means well.'

'So well,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'that your honour hath but to defer to her opinions, and your fortunes will be higher even than I looked for. As for myself,' here he sighed, and looked miserable for the space of three and a half rummers of punch, when he cheered up, and said that if starvation was before him, all the more reason for enjoying the present moment, and that of all the choice gifts of Heaven, that of whisky punch was certainly the one for which mankind should be most grateful. While he discoursed upon its merits I left them, and to bed.

CHAPTER IX.

A HUNTING PARTY.

It has been pretended that the party of this day was one of the earliest attempts made by Mr. Forster the younger towards making himself the leader of the cause in the north. On the contrary, he had as yet no thought at all about leading. The gentlemen came together for no other purpose than to meet the Bishop (many of them being Catholics, who could only see him on some such occasion) and Lord Derwentwater, and the meeting was especially summoned to enable these two to meet one another. Among those who came to the meeting were many of the gentlemen who five years afterwards, to their undoing, took up arms for the Prince. Most of them lay at Hexham overnight, and came over the moor in the morning. It was a gallant sight,

indeed, to see the gentlemen riding into the quadrangle, and giving their horses to the grooms, while they paid their respects to Lady Crewe, who was already dressed, early as it was, and received them with a kindly welcome which pleased all. The Bishop, she said, begged to be excused at that early hour; he would meet his friends in the evening. Meantime, breakfast, or luncheon, was spread, with cold pasties, spiced beef, game, and beer for all who chose.

They were a hearty and hungry crew. One cannot but remember with what goodwill they trooped in, and how they made the sirloins of beef to grow small, the pasties to vanish, and the birds to disappear, except their bones; also with what cheerfulness they exhorted each other to fill up and drink again. They had a day's hunting before them. Surely a man may eat and drink who is going out for six or eight hours a-horseback across Hexhamshire Common. It was a pretty sight, certainly, when they had finished, to see them mount in the great quadrangle, with the shouting of the younger men — ah! King Solomon's medicine of the merry heart!—and

so off, trooping through the old gateway out upon the open moor, whither the huntsmen had taken the hounds. I, who seldom rode, went with them on this day. Beside me rode Lord Derwentwater, brave in scarlet, as were his brothers. But he was grave, and even sad.

'I cannot but think, Miss Dorothy,' he said, 'that it is a strange thing for us to laugh and shout while our business is to talk of treason, according to the law of the land. When will treason become loyalty, and rebellion fidelity to the King?'

Then there arose a great yo-hoing and shouting, and the fox was found, and we all rode after it. About that day's hunting it needs not to speak much. It was a long run. Tom, with Charlie Radcliffe, was in at the death, and they gave me the creature's brush. As for Lord Derwentwater, he left not my side, being more concerned to talk with me than to gallop after the hounds. Certainly he never was a keen fox-hunter, his ideas of the hunt being taken from France, where, as he hath told me, the party ride down lanes or *allées*, in a great forest, after a wild boar or a

stag, the sides of the lanes being lined with rustics, to prevent the boar from taking shelter in the wood. But he owned that our sport was more manly. This was a pleasant, nay, a delightful ride for me, seeing as I did in the eyes of his lord-hip those signs of admiration which please the hearts of all women alike, whether they be confident in their beauty, or afraid that they possess no charms to fix the affections of inconstant man. Perhaps we guess very readily what most we desire. At this time (let me confess and own without shame what need not be concealed) I had begun to desire one thing very much ; that is to say, I understood very well that the happiest woman in the world would be she to whom this young gentleman would give the priceless blessing of his love. This made me watchful of his speech and looks ; and enabled me, young and inexperienced as I was, to read very well the confession made by eyes full of admiration, though no word at all was spoken. No gentleman in the world had better eyes or sweeter than Lord Derwentwater, and no man's love, I knew very well, was more to be

desired ; and, innocent and ignorant as we were, neither of us, at that time, considered the difficulties in the way. Poor Dorothy !

Some of the elder gentlemen remained behind, and sat all the morning to talk with Lady Crewe, once their toast and charming beauty, still beautiful and gracious as a great lady should be. Every woman likes, I suppose, to feel that men remember the beauty of her youth. It is a fleeting thing, and we are told that, like all earthly things, it is a vanity. Nevertheless, it is a vanity which pleases for a lifetime, and, like understanding in a man, it may be used, while it lasts, for great purposes. Lady Crewe knew well how to use her beauty and charm of words as well as of face, in order to lead men whithersoever she would. This is a simple art, though few women understand it, being nothing more or less than to make each man think the thing which he most desires to believe true, namely, that he occupies wholly the thoughts, hopes, interest, and sympathy of the woman who would lure him and lead him.

'It is not love,' said Mr. Hilyard once, 'so much as vanity, which leads the world. Dalila

conquered Samson by playing upon his pride of strength. Cleopatra overcame Antony by acknowledging the irresistible charm of a hero.'

So Lady Crewe, by coaxing, flattering, making men feel happy and proud of themselves (since they would please so great and gracious a lady), in a word, by charming men, could do with them what she pleased. Of course it need not be said that there could be no question of gallantry with this stately dame, the wife of the great Lord Crewe. Certainly not ; yet all men were her slaves.

Some time between ten and eleven in the forenoon, the party being all ridden forth, my lord the Bishop came out from his chamber, dressed and ready for the duties of the day. At so advanced a stage of life, one must, I suppose, approach each day, which may be the last, slowly and carefully, fortified before the work of the day begins with food, prayer, and meditation. His lordship looked older in the morning than in the evening ; yet not decayed. Though the lines and crow's-feet of age lay thickly upon his face, so that it was seamed and scarred by a thousand

waving lines, his eye was as bright and his lips as firm as if he were but forty or fifty. After a little discourse with the gentlemen who had remained behind, he sent immediately for Mr. Hilyard. He, to say the truth, was by no means anxious for the interview, and had shown, ever since this party was proposed, a singular desire to avoid the Bishop; proposing a hundred different pretexts for his absence.

First, his lordship, with great show of politeness, of which he was perfect master, begged Mr. Hilyard to show him the ruins and remains of this strange place, which our steward very willingly did, hoping, as will be seen, to stave off the questions which he feared. Presently, after talk about the Premonstratensian Friars (this was the learned name of the monks who were murdered, but why they had so long a name or what it means, I know not, nor need we inquire into the superstitious reasons for such a name), and after considering the quadrangle and the ancient Gate Tower, they turned into the graveyard, where were the ruins of the chapel. Here they talked of Gothic architecture, a subject on

which, as on so many other things, Mr. Hilyard was well versed; and the Bishop, after lamenting the ruin of so beautiful a place, said that he could not suffer whole families thus to grow up in heathendom with so fair a chapel waiting but a roof, and that he should take order therefor.

'As for you, sir,' he said to Mr. Hilyard, 'you seem to be possessed of some learning. You have studied, I perceive, the architecture of our churches.'

'In my humble way, my lord, I have read such books on the subject as have fallen into my hands.'

'And you are not unacquainted with the ancient dispositions of monasteries, it would seem.'

'Also in my small way, my lord; and with such chances of observation as I have obtained.'

Then the Bishop seated himself upon a fallen stone in the corner of the tower, where he was sheltered from the wind, and where the sunshine fell, and fixed upon Mr. Hilyard his eyes, which were like the eyes of a hawk for clearness, and more terrible for sternness than the eyes of a lion, and said:

'Then, sir, let me ask: Who are you?'

'My lord, my name, at your lordship's service, is Antony Hilyard.'

'So much I know. And for ten years, or thereabouts, in the service of the Forsters. Now, sir, I meddle not with affairs which belong not to me, therefore when Mr. Thomas Forster of Etherston received you as my nephew's tutor, I made no inquiry. Again, when I heard, through her ladyship, that the tutor, instead of becoming a chaplain, as is generally his laudable ambition, became a steward, I made no inquiry, because, tutor or steward, your affairs seemed to concern me not at all. But in view of the singular affection which my lady hath conceived for her nephew, her hopes for his future, and her designs as regards his inheritance, I can no longer suffer him to remain under the influence of men about whose character I know nothing. Doubtless, sir, you are honest. My nephew and his sister swear that you are honest.'

'I hope so, my lord.'

'It is certain that you have, whether for purposes of your own or not, acquired such

an influence over both my nephew and my niece that I must come to an understanding. You sing, act, and play the Merry Andrew, when he has his friends about him ; you manage his household, and keep his accounts ; you have taught the young lady to sing, play music, read French, and other things, which, as my lady is assured, are all innocent and desirable accomplishments. We have also learned that although you were engaged upon a salary or wage of thirty pounds a year, you have never received any of that money, save a guinea here and there for clothing. Now, sir, I judge not beforehand, but you may be, for aught I know, a vile Whig, endeavouring to instil into an honest mind pernicious opinions ; or you may be one of those secret plotters who are the curse of our party, and lure on gentlemen to their destruction ; or you may be, which is not impossible, a Jesuit on some secret service. So, sir, before we go any further, you will tell me who and what you are—whose son, where born and brought up—of what stock, town, religion ?'

'For my birth, my lord, I am of London ; for my religion, I am a Protestant and humble

servant of the Church; for my origin, my father was a vintner, with a tavern in Barbican: for my education, it was at St. Paul's School, where I got credit for some scholarship, and'—here he bowed his head, and looked guilty—'at Oxford, in your lordship's own College of Lincoln.'

'Go on, sir.' For now Mr. Hilyard showed signs of the greatest distress, and began to cough, to hem, to blow his nose, and to wipe his brow. 'Go on, sir, I command.'

'I cannot deny, my lord—nay, I confess—though it cost me the post I hold and drive me out into the world—that I concealed from Mr. Forster the reasons why I left Oxford without a degree. I hope that your lordship will consider my subsequent conduct to have in some measure mitigated the offence.'

'What was the reason?'

'My lord, I was expelled.'

The Bishop nodded his head as terrible as great Jove.

'So, sir,' he said, while the unlucky man trembled before him, 'so, sir, you were expelled. This is truly an excellent recommenda-

tion for a tutor and teacher of young gentlemen. Pray, sir, why this punishment?'

'My lord,' the poor man replied in great confusion, 'suffer me of your patience to explain that from my childhood upwards I have continually been afflicted—affliction must I needs call that which hath led me to the ruin of my hopes—with the desire of mocking, acting, and impersonating; also with the temptation to write verses, whether in Latin or in English; and with the love of exciting the laughter and mirth of my companions. So that to hold up to derision the usher while at school, which caused me often to be soundly switched, was my constant joy—even though I had afterwards to cry—because my fellows laughed at the performance. Or I was acting and rehearsing for their delight some passage from Dryden, Shakespeare, or Ben Jonson, which I had seen upon the stage.'

'In plain language, sir, thou wast a common buffoon.'

'Say, rather, my lord, with submission, an actor—*histrio*. Roscius was rather my model than the Roman mime.'

'As thou wilt, sir. Go on.'

'Your lordship cannot but remember that at every public act the Terræ Filius, after the Proctor, hath permission to ridicule, or to hold up to derision, or to satirize——'

'Man,' cried the Bishop, 'I had partly guessed it. Thou wert, then, a Terræ Filius.'

'My lord, it is most true.'

The Bishop's face lost its severity. He laughed while Mr. Hilyard stood before him trembling, yet a little reassured. For, to say the truth, he expected nothing but instant dismissal.

'The Terræ Filius,' said the Bishop. 'There were many of them, but few of much account. Some were coarse, some were ill bred, some were rustic, some were rude—here and there one was witty. The heads and tutors loved better the coarse than the witty. Ay, ay! They expelled Tom Pittie when I was a bachelor, and they made Lancelot Addison, afterwards Dean of Lichfield, beg pardon on his knees. So, sir, you were the licensed jester of the University? An honourable post, forsooth!'

'It was not so much, my lord,' Mr. Hilyard went on, 'for my jests before the University,

as for certain verses which were brought home to me by the treachery of a man, who—but that does not concern your lordship.'

'Of what kind were the verses?'

'They were of a satirical kind.' Mr. Hilyard pulled out his pocket-book, in which he kept memoranda, receipts, bills, and so forth. 'If your lordship would venture to look at them. I keep always by me a copy to remind me of my sin.' He found a worn and thumb-marked sheet of printed paper. 'In Latinity they have been said to have a touch of Martial or Ausonius at his best—but I may not boast.' He placed the verses in the Bishop's hands, and waited, with a look of expectant pride rather than of repentance: he was no longer a confessing sinner, or a jester brought to shame; but, rather, a poet waiting for his patron's verdict of praise or blame.

The Bishop read; the Bishop smiled; then the Bishop laughed.

'The matter, truly, is most impudent, and richly deserved punishment. The style, doubtless, deserved reward. And for this thou wast expelled?'

'My letters recommendatory, my lord,

made no mention of the thing. Indeed, they were all written for me by those scholars who were my friends and companions.'

'Well, sir, it is done, and I suppose you have repented often enough. For so good a scholar might have aspired to the dignities of the Church. It is an old tale: for a moment's gratification, a lifelong sorrow. You laughed as a boy, in order that you might cry as a man. You might have become Fellow, Dean, Tutor, even Master; Rector of a country living, Canon, Prebendary, Archdeacon, or even—Bishop. There are, in these times, when gentlemen fly from the Church, many Bishops on the Bench of no better origin than your own. You are steward to a country gentleman; keeper of farm and household accounts; fellow-toper, when his honour is alone; jester, when he hath company.'

'I know it, my lord,' replied Mr. Hilyard humbly. 'I am Mr. Forster's servant. Yet, a faithful servant.'

'I know nothing to the contrary. Why have you not, during these six years, asked for the money promised at the outset?'

'Oh, my lord—consider—pray—I am

under obligation of gratitude to a most kind and generous master, and a most considerate mistress. They subsist, though his honour would not like it stated so plainly, on the bounty of your lordship and my lady. Should I presume to take for myself what was meant for his honour?'

The Bishop made no reply for a while, but looked earnestly into his face.

'Either thou art a very honest fellow,' he said, at length, 'or thou art a practised courtier.'

'No courtier, my lord.'

'I believe not. Now, sir, I think it will be my duty to advise her ladyship that no change need be made. But further inquiry must be made. Continue, therefore, for the present, in thy duties. And, for the salary, I will see that thou lose nothing.'

He then began to ask, in apparently a careless fashion, about the manner of our daily life, hearing how Tom spent his days in shooting and so forth, and showed no desire for reading, yet was no fool, and ready to receive information; how the hospitality of the Manor House, though not so splendid as that of its

late owners, was abundant, and open to all who came, and so forth; to all of which the Bishop listened, as great men use, namely, as if these small things are of small importance, yet it is well to know them, and that, being so small, it is not necessary to express an opinion upon them.

'I hear,' he said, 'that certain agitators continue to go about the country. Do they come here?'

Mr. Hilyard replied that Captain Gascoigne and Captain Talbot had been to the north that year, but that Mr. Forster was not, to his knowledge, in correspondence with them.

'It is important,' said the Bishop, 'that no steps be taken for the present. There are reasons of State. See that you encourage no such work. I take it that my nephew is popular, by reason of a frank character and generous hand, such as the Forsters have always displayed, rather than by learning or eloquence.'

'Your lordship is right. If I may presume to point out a fault in my patron——'

'What is it?'

'It is his inexperience. He hath never,

except to Cambridge, gone beyond his own county. Therefore he may be easily imposed upon, and led—whither his friends would not wish him to go.'

To this the Bishop made no reply, but fell into a meditation, and presently rose and left Mr. Hilyard among the ruins.

'I expected,' said Mr. Hilyard, when he told me of this discourse, 'nothing short of an order to be packing. Nothing short of that would do, I thought, for a man who had been expelled the University for holding up the Seniors to derision. Alas! I have been a monstrous fool. Yet I doubt not I should do it again. When wit is in, wisdom is out. There was a man of whom I once read, "He might have saved his life could he have refrained his tongue." But he could not. Therefore, he said his epigram and was hanged, happy in the thought that his *bon-mot* would be remembered. Like good actions, good sayings live and bear fruit beyond the tomb. My satire on the Senior Proctor—the Bishop laughed at it. Think you that many Bishops in the future will not also laugh at it?'

'Is it so very comical, Mr. Hilyard, that

it would make me laugh? For, you know, my sex are not so fond of laughing as your own.'

He replied, a little disconcerted, that the chief points of his satire lay in the Latin, which I could not understand.

The business of the day, namely, the conversation between Lord Derwentwater and Lord Crewe, took place in the evening, after dinner. Our guests were divided into two sets, one of which consisted of the older and more important gentlemen present, and the other of the younger sons. The latter spent their evening in the kitchen under the refectory, where they were perfectly happy, if the noise of singing and laughing denotes happiness. I saw Tom's face grow melancholy as he sat between Lord Crewe on his left and Lady Crewe on his right, listening to discourse on grave and serious matters, while all this merriment went on below. Strange it was to see at the same table an English Bishop and a Catholic Earl.

When the servants were gone, Tom rose in his place and reminded his friends that they were assembled there in order to afford an

opportunity for a conference between Lord Crewe, the Bishop of Durham, on the one hand, and Lord Derwentwater, with the honest gentlemen of the county, on the other. This conference being happily arranged, they would remind each other that they had with them the most venerable of the party, one who could remember Noll Cromwell himself, and had voted for King and Bishops before Charles II. came back. With which words he asked them to drink to the Prince.

After this they began by all, with one consent, talking of the latest intelligence, and of the great hopes which they entertained; how the Queen was reported to lean more and more to the cause of her brother; how the people of London were fast recovering their loyalty; and how the country, save for a few pestilent and unnatural Whigs, was Jacobite to the core; and so forth. It seemed as if I had heard that kind of talk all my life. If it was true, why could they not recall the Prince at once, and without more to do? If it was not true, why try to keep up their spirits with a falsehood? The plain, simple truth does not do for men; they must have

exaggerations, rumours, see everything greater than it is. Otherwise, there would be no such thing as a party.

'To one wise man,' said Mr. Hilyard to me, speaking privately of this matter, 'it seems as if, things being weighed, the for and the against, the scale inclines this way. To another wise man, the scale inclines that way. To the followers of those wise men who cannot weigh the arguments, or even perceive them, the scale kicks the beam. The more ignorant the partisan, the more thorough he is. Wherefore, the Lord protect us from wars of religion, in which every common soldier knows more than his officers.'

While this kind of talk went on, the Bishop sat quiet and grave, saying nothing; while Lord Derwentwater listened, and Lady Crewe smiled graciously on one after the other as they appealed to her.

When each had said what was in his mind on the matter of loyalty, the Bishop invited Lord Derwentwater to tell the company, who had never had the happiness of seeing the Prince, what manner of man he was to look upon.

'In person, my Lord Bishop,' he replied, 'His Highness is tall, and inclined to be thin, as his father was before him. He is, although so young in years, already grave in manner; he speaks little; he is rarely heard to laugh; he hath little or nothing of the natural gaiety of young men in France. He rides well; his personal courage cannot be doubted, having been sufficiently proved at Oudenarde and Malplaquet; he is familiar with the names of all his friends. For instance, in Northumberland, he knows that he can reckon on Tom Forster'—here my lord bowed to Tom, who reddened with pleasure, and drank off another bumper to the Prince —'and on Mr. Errington'—here Mr. Errington did the like, and his lordship went on to name other gentlemen, especially Protestants, in the room.

'If a woman may ask the question,' said Lady Crewe, 'we would hope that his character for religion and virtue, as well as for courage, is such as to endear him to the hearts of those who would fain see princes of blameless life.'

At this time the Prince, then only two-and-

twenty years of age, though he had not acquired the reputation which afterwards made many of his friends in England cold to him, was by no means free from reproach—indeed, there are many who throw temptation in the way of a prince—and Lord Dewentwater paused before he replied.

'As for religion,' said my lord, 'I know that he hath been most religiously educated, and that his mother is a saintly woman. So much I can depose from my own knowledge. For, if my Lord Bishop will pardon the remark, there were more masses at St. Germain's than many about the Court would willingly attend. As for virtue, there have been rumours—are there not rumours of every Prince? One must not repeat idle reports.'

'One would wish to know,' said the Bishop, 'if the Prince hath a martial bearing, and one which may encourage his followers. Let us remember the gallantry of Prince Rupert, and the cheerful courage of young King Hal at Agincourt.'

'I have never seen him,' Lord Derwentwater replied, 'with troops. I know not whether his face would show the cheerful

courage of which your lordship speaks. That he is brave is well known. If he is less at home in camp than in his Court, we must thank the Queen, his mother, and the good priests, his instructors, who have made him, perhaps, fitter for heaven than for earth.'

'I very much doubt it,' said the Bishop, with a smile.

It was wonderful to think that here was a young gentleman who had actually been brought up with His Highness, and conversed with him, and was telling us about him.

'Well,' said the Bishop, 'they may have made him fitter for the Mass than the march. Pity—pity—a thousand pities that his father must needs throw away his crown for his creed—your pardon, my lord—when he had already, had he pleased, the ancient, yet reformed, Church of England. It likes me not. I would rather he were more of a soldier and less of a priest. These things are well known to me already, but I wished that these gentlemen here also should hear them. For, believe me, all is not yet clear before us, my lord. I have watched the times for fifty years and more. The crowd hath shouted now for one

side, and now for another ; but never, saving your lordship's presence, have their greasy caps been tossed up for a Roman Catholic. And, even if the general opinion be true, and the voice of the country be for the young Prince, I am very certain that he will not win the English heart, and so secure his throne, unless he consent to change his religion.'

'It may be so,' replied the Earl. 'Yet sure I am that he will never change his religion.'

'Then,' said the Bishop, 'if he comes home this year, or next, the very next year after his priests will get him sent abroad again. We are a people who have religion much upon the lips—and it is the Protestant religion—but it hinders not the luxury of the rich or the vices of the poor. There are still living among us —I say this in presence of you Catholic gentlemen—those whose fathers and grandfathers have spoken with men and women who remembered the flames of Smithfield. Your lordship is young, but you will never—I prophesy—no, never—see England so changed that she will look without jealousy and hatred upon a court of priests.'

'The King may surround himself, if he pleases, with Protestant advisers,' said the Earl. 'We of the old faith are content to sit at home in obscurity. Your lordship will not seek to burn us. We ask but toleration and our civil rights.'

The Bishop shook his head.

'Will he be allowed?' he asked. 'Meantime, my lord, it does my heart good to see you—still a young man and an Englishman—no Frenchman—back again among your own people. Trust me, you will be happier here than at St. Germain's or Versailles. Believe an old man who was about the Court for nearly thirty years: it is an air which begetteth bad humours of the blood—with jealousies, envies, and heartburnings. He who waiteth upon Princes must expect rubs such as happen not to quiet men. And, young man,' he laid his hand upon the Earl's shoulder, 'listen not, I entreat you, to vapouring Irish captains or to Scotchmen disappointed of their pensions, or to soured English Papists, or to those who have waited in antechamber till rage has seized their heart. Let us remain on the right side. Some day it will

prevail. On that day the voice of the whole country will call their Sovereign home. It may be that they will make him first embrace the faith as contained in the Thirty-nine Articles. Justice is mighty, and shall prevail. But, gentlemen, no plots! And you, sir, as you are the nearest among us all to the throne, so be the most cautious. Set the young hot heads of the north a good example. Gentlemen'—he rose, tall and majestic, with white waving locks and stooping shoulders, and his wife rose at the same time and gave him her arm—'my lords and gentlemen, Anglican or Catholic, whether of the old or the reformed faith, I give my prayers for the rightful cause, and to all here the blessing of a Bishop. Yea!'—he raised his tall figure to the full height, 'the blessing of one who is a successor of the Apostles by unbroken and lineal descent and right divine!'

Lord Derwentwater bent a knee, and kissed the Bishop's hand. Then the company parted right and left, bowing low, while the old Bishop, with his lady and her niece, left the room.

CHAPTER X.

A TENDER CONSCIENCE.

So, for prudence' sake, and for carefulness, and to avoid the charges of an open house, we remained at Blanchland until the New Year.

Before her departure, Lady Crewe held a long and very serious talk with Tom, the nature of which I was not told at the time. For many days afterwards he was graver than was his wont, and talked much about his place in the county; he reprimanded Mr. Hilyard, also, when he spoke of sport, for thinking of nothing more worthy his attention (whereas the poor man thought of sport not at all, save only to please his patron), and he made inquiry about the House of Commons, the duties and privileges of members, and how a gentleman may rise to eminence in that

august assembly, from which I conjectured that some plan had been laid before him by my aunt. He spoke also of matrimony and of heiresses, saying that a man in his position, although his estates were embarrassed, might look as high as anyone, and that London was the place to find a rich gentlewoman—not Northumberland, where the families were so large and the times grown so peaceful that of heiresses there were none in the whole county.

'Sir,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'I know little concerning the ways of the great, yet I have walked in St. James's Park and seen the ladies followed by the beaux, few of whom can be compared with your honour for comeliness and strength; while there are many who cut a fine figure in the park and the theatre, yet have never an acre of land in all their family.'

Tom was twenty-seven by this time, no longer in the first flush of manhood, but a handsome fellow still, though beginning a double chin and inclined to be corpulent. As regards the pursuit of an heiress, I never heard anything more about it, and conjecture

that it was a part of her ladyship's advice offered, but not carried into practice. In matters of gallantry, our North-country gentlemen are sadly to seek — nor do the ladies expect it of them ; and an heiress and a fine lady of London would have so many beaux following her, that a plain man would have very little chance, however good his family.

Presently, Tom grew tired of keeping his own counsel, and therefore told us—I mean Mr. Hilyard as well as myself—all that had passed. Her ladyship was, he said, most gracious and kind. She assured him that the restoration of her own family to their lost wealth and former position was all that she now lived for, saving her obedience to her husband ; that she had no longer any hope of children, and that while Lord Crewe's Northamptonshire property would go to his own nephews, nieces, and cousins, he had most generously given to her the bestowal of the Northumberland property, which she was resolved upon bequeathing entire to her dear nephew.

This was good hearing indeed. But better

was to follow. The Manor House was to be maintained as before, and a reasonable allowance was to be made to Tom out of the revenues of the estate. He was, therefore, once more master of Bamborough, and we might still sit in the chancel without feeling that we were usurping that place of honour. All was to be Tom's.

Yet there were conditions—just and reasonable conditions I call them, and such as should have been accepted without a murmur. But men are so masterful, they brook not the thought of bridle or of rein. First, Tom was to remember that he was no longer a young man, and that such follies as sitting up all night drinking and singing in the company of young gentlemen whose expectations and fortunes were far below his own, should now cease ; that on the retirement of his father he was to become Knight of the Shire in his place ; that he was to go no more to races and matches where money is rashly and wickedly lost ; that he was to take unto himself, in reasonable time, a wife of good stock and approved breeding ; and that, finally, as regards politics and the Party, he was to take

no important step, at any time, without her ladyship's consent and approval.

These conditions Tom accepted, yet grumbled at them.

'Why,' he said, 'I am already seven-and-twenty, and am still to be in leading-strings. As for drinking, Heaven knows it is not once a month that we have a bout—is it, Tony? Well, two or three times at most; as for racing, if a gentleman have a good horse why should he not back him for a few pounds? Is one to be for ever counting up the pence and watching how they fly? As for a wife, all in good time. When Dorothy marries, perhaps, or when—but Heaven sends wives.'

'The conditions, sir,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'appear to me such as your honour would do wrong to refuse, because they can never be enforced; nor can her ladyship ascertain whether or no they have been obeyed, except as to the matter of Parliament, in which there can be no doubt that it would be greatly to your honour's interest to learn something of the affairs of the nation, if only with a view to those great offices and positions of State

which will, doubtless, some day be forced upon you.'

'Well,' Tom replied, 'it is something to have in the house one who can talk a man into anything. Why, Tony, if her ladyship ordered me a flogging at the cart's tail, I warrant you would make it out to be very much in my interest.'

We were not without company, especially in the autumn, for Hexhamshire and Allendale Commons abound with wild birds and game of all kinds: there are grouse, black-cock, partridge, bustard, wild-geese, ducks, water-rail, heron, peewit, teal, and snipe; also for those who care to shoot them there are eagles, hawks, falcons, kestrel, and kite; so that if gentlemen came there was always at least game for the table, and he who sits down to a coursed hare, a brace of partridges, a rabbit-pie, or from the farm a Michaelmas goose or fat capon, need not complain about his dinner.

They came, therefore, across the moors for the sake of the sport, or for friendship with Tom, or to enjoy the singing and play-acting of the jester, or perhaps some of them—I

know not—on account of myself. It is nigh upon thirty years ago. Alas! the pleasant times are gone. Wherefore let me, without boastfulness, but with gratitude, remember the days of my youth, when men took pleasure in such beauty as had been granted to me. I could tell (but refrain, because this book is not about myself, but my brother) how Perry Widdrington and Ned Swinburne quarrelled about me, and were like to fight—the foolish boys—as if running each other through the ribs would make a girl love either of them any the better. I had a deal to do with them: for, first their honour was concerned; then they had said such words to each other as required, and would have, the shedding of blood; next—they were old friends from childhood, and it was a shame for each to treat the other so—they would be revenged; lastly, what right had either to interfere when it was plain that the other was in love with Dorothy?

I told these boys that they were a couple of fools; that if they fought I would never speak with either of them again; that as for their religion, they were undeserving the

name of Christians, who must forgive one another; and that, if they wanted further speech of me, they must immediately shake hands and be brothers again. At last they consented, and, with melancholy faces, shook hands upon it. Why they were sad over it I know not, because this handshaking saved the life of one and might have given the other a bride; only that the lady, when their hands had been given, told them she was sorry, but she could take neither. So they went away glum, and would not forgive me for a long time. There was also young Tom Clavering, who gave much trouble, being more persistent than most, and had to be spoken to very plainly. I might certainly have married one of these young gentlemen; but I know not how the family pot would have been kept boiling, or a roof kept over our heads, for they were all younger sons, with a poor forty pounds a year at most for all their portion, and the great family house to live in while they pleased; and not one with any thought of bettering himself. Young men think that the pot is filled with wishing, and that love provides beef as well as kisses. They were

brave and gallant boys ; much I loved to see their hearty faces and hear their merry laugh : but I could not regard them with the favour which they wanted, and for a very good reason—because there was another man who had already fired my heart, and insomuch that, beside him, all other men seemed small and mean.

This, then, was the manner of our life at Blanchland, among the ruins which the old monks had left, and their melancholy ghosts. Sometimes I, who was as strong of limb and as well able to do a day's march as any, would go with the gentlemen when they went shooting. Pretty it is to watch the dogs put up the game—the grouse running in the cover, the swift whirr of the coveys, and the snipe with their quick flight and their thousand twistings and turnings, designed to deceive the huntsman and to escape his shot. Sometimes I would don riding-dress (but not coat, hat, and wig, as some ladies are reported to do nearer London), and ride with them after the fox, well pleased if, as often happened, Master Reynard escaped the hounds, putting the hounds off the scent by crossing a stream ; or,

but this was seldom, I would get up early in the morning, and go with them otter-hunting, which is too rough a sport for a girl and too cruel, with the fighting of the dogs and the killing of the poor brute at the end. After every party there was the finish of the day, with the feast—rough and plenty—the flowing of small-ale, stout October, and whisky punch, and Mr. Hilyard always ready, after his first glass or two, to play Jack Merryman for the company; and the Rev. Mr. Patten, if he was there, ready to bow low at every remark which my brother might make, and to say 'Hush!' when he was going to speak, and to sigh when he had spoken as if Solomon himself had uttered out of his boundless wisdom another proverb. When the punch began to go round I withdrew.

One of the most frequent visitors, as I have said already, was this Reverend Robert Patten, Vicar of Allenhead, for whom at the very outset I conceived a violent dislike. He came, I doubt not, partly in order to ingratiate himself with one who had two livings in his gift, and partly in order, if possible, to obtain a recommendation to the Bishop, and

partly in order to get, at another's expense, as much drink as he could carry—and more. For my own part, I deplore the practice of taking too much wine, even among gentlemen, but in a clergyman it is truly scandalous. As for the enmity between Mr. Hilyard and this disgraceful minister, that by no means abated, but quite the contrary; so that, after the formal greeting, they exchanged not a single word, both making as if the other were not present.

At last I asked Mr. Hilyard for the cause of this bad blood between them.

'It seems to me,' I said, 'that Mr. Patten, whom I confess I like not, is open to no other charge than that of drunkenness, which alone should not make him hateful in your eyes. We must not, Mr. Hilyard, judge our brethren too severely.'

'It is true,' he said, 'that the sight of his sleek face and thick lips makes me angry, and sometimes almost beyond myself. Yet I pray, Miss Dorothy, that you hold me excused.'

This I would not do, but pressed him to tell me all, which he did after much hesitation,

'A Christian must not hate his brethren,' said Mr. Hilyard, 'but he may, I suppose, regard him with contempt. It is with contempt that I look upon Bob Patten. Know, therefore, Miss Dorothy, that we were at Oxford together, and of the same College. If I may say it without vanity, my parts were tolerable ; but Bob was ever a dull dog. Had I not imitated the part of the Prodigal Son, I might now have been a grave and reverend Fellow—perhaps the Tutor.'

He had already told me of his foolish conduct as regards the satire against one of his superiors.

'Alas! the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil are greater to some than to others. There are, I am sure, many men who are tempted by none of the things which drive some of us to madness. I am myself drawn as by strong ropes whenever I hear the sound of a fiddle, the clinking of a glass, and the voices of those who laugh ; if there is a church on one side of the street and a theatre on the other, I have no choice, but must needs go into the theatre. This was my ruin. Though I studied in the morning,

I drank, and sang, and made verses in the evening. So I became known to the Proctors, and an object of suspicion.'

'But what has this to do with Mr. Patten?'

'Creeping Bob neither sang (because his voice was like the grating of rusty nails upon a slate), nor drank (because no one would give him or trust him), nor made merry (having been born on the shady side of the street), nor offended Proctors and Tutors, hoping maybe, but in this he hath been mistaken, to make up for muddy wit by nice morality, and perhaps to get a Fellowship and a fat College living. This conduct made him deservedly popular with his fellows, and gained him the glorious title of Creeping Bob. As he was then, so is he now.'

'But, Mr. Hilyard, ought the prejudice of youthful days to be considered sufficient cause for so great a contempt?'

'Nay—but there is more. For certain small natural gifts'—he assumed an air of humility which was nothing in the world but pride in a vizard—'which have been my plague; namely, that I could make epigrams

(yet Martial himself was always a dependent on patrons, and lived in poverty) and verses (poets are allowed to be a ragged race) and orations, whether in Latin or in English, and either in the comical or the serious vein, and could in half an hour write more and better to the point than dull-witted pates such as Bob can do in a year—I got a reputation, and was presently regarded with terror by every Doctor of Divinity and reverend person in the University, because whatever was whispered of scandal, as of one grave Professor being carried home brimful of punch, and another—but these are old stories—suffice it that the next day there was dished up, hot and hot, such a course of verses, satires, epigrams, and secret history as made the Fathers of the University tremble. And though they knew the hand which wrought these verses, they could not prove the fact.

'Perhaps I had still escaped, but for a dastardly act of crowning treachery. For I had got safely to my third and last year, when I ought to have been presenting myself for a degree in Arts, with my string of syllogisms. Then, indeed, my life would

have been different; instead of a servant—whose fetters, Miss Dorothy, you have most generously covered with silk'—he bowed low and his voice shook—'I say, generously covered with the finest silk, so that they have not galled the limbs of him that wears them, I might have been now a great preacher, or a grave scholar, a credit to my father's care, and a monument and proof of answer to his prayers. Yet I lost all for the glory of a single set of verses.'

I knew already that he had committed this great madness. It seems incredible that young men can be found so eager for applause that they will even stake the hazard of a life upon the laughter of an hour. But this, Mr. Hilyard did.

'As for my oration at Commemoration, that,' he went on, 'might have been passed over, though there were angry threats uttered. Yet it was allowed that a better oration than mine had never been made by any Terræ Filius in the memory of man. What did my business was a satire on the Vice-Chancellor, which the next day went about from College to College. There was no name to it, but

everybody knew who wrote it. This gave them an excuse for bringing forward my speech before the Heads, and while one wanted me to be forgiven, and another to write me for two years in the Black Book, and another to send me down altogether, lo you! the President of my College settled the matter for me, for he lugged out of his pocket a letter in which the writer, whose name he withheld, said he felt moved by the extraordinary tenderness of his conscience to disclose the fact that the author of the satire was no other than Mr. Antony Hilyard, of his own College, and offered proof, not only as regarded the last production, but of every epigram and squib about which noise had been made for a whole twelvemonth. After that there was no more to do. They sent for me, the letter was read before my face, and I was expelled. The writer of the letter was no other than Creeping Bob. This the President himself afterwards told me. If I had been Aristides the Just they could not more unanimously have voted my expulsion.'

This, then, was the reason of his animosity.

Certainly, no one can deny that it was a good and sufficient reason.

'Doth Mr. Patten know——'

'I believe he knows it not. Yet, he who has once injured a man always fears that man, and would injure him again if he could. There is a way in which he could do me another wrong. I doubt not he will some day discover this method.'

'But how can he hurt you now?'

'When I was expelled, there was nothing for it but to run before my creditors in the town got wind of my misfortunes. It is ten years ago, but creditors never forget, and, were they to learn where to find me, a debtors' prison would be my lot. If Mr. Patten is so officious as to tell anyone in Oxford—well, at nineteen one is a fool, but sometimes folly is punished worse than crime. I had no right, being penniless, to have debts at all; nor should I, the son of a vintner, have presumed to wear white linen, lace ruffles, and silver buttons. Yet I did, trusting to pay when I was made a Fellow, as is the custom at the University. Wherefore I go daily in terror of the bailiffs, and at night

lie down thinking that Newcastle Gaol is my certain end.'

'Surely, a minister of the Church would not——'

'Bob Patten would if he thought of it. As for the mischief which he tries to work between his honour and myself, there, indeed, I defy him.'

So for the present the conversation came to an end. But I turned the matter over in my own mind, and watched the two. I saw that Mr. Patten still cast upon the man whom he had injured malignant scowls when he thought himself unobserved, and I found an opportunity to converse privately with him as well.

I began by asking him whether he had known Mr. Hilyard in former times.

He confessed that their acquaintance was of old times, when they were young and at the same College together; though, he added, they were never friends or of the same way of thinking. For which he piously thanked Heaven.

Thereupon, I asked him further if there were anything, so far as he remembered,

against the private character of Mr. Hilyard —other than might be alleged against any young man.

Here Mr. Patten hesitated. Presently, he said that as regards character a great deal might be said ; but, indeed, a young man who was expelled the University for intolerable license, railing accusations, exaggerated charges, and unspeakable disrespect towards his superiors, had need of all that could be said for him ; still, he would say nothing, only that, as he had reason to believe, there were many tradesmen of Oxford, honest creatures, who had trusted his word, and now would gladly know where Mr. Hilyard could be found.

Upon this I stopped him short, and informed him in plain language that, as no one could tell these tradesmen except himself, he must understand, once and for all, that the favour of Mr. Forster, if he hoped anything from it, depended on his observing silence.

'Let there be,' I added, 'no letters of a "tender conscience," Mr. Patten'—at this he started and looked confused—'I say, let no letters of a "tender conscience" be written.

Remember that. Should anything be done by Oxford people, it shall certainly be laid at your door, though, to be sure, a body would be sorry if a godly minister, such as yourself, should suffer from an injurious suspicion.'

Mr. Patten, who had turned first red and then pale, at mention of a letter of conscience, protested that he bore no malice towards Mr. Hilyard ; and that, so far as the Oxford people were concerned, he had nothing to make or meddle in the matter.

Then I went farther. I said that Mr. Hilyard had now been in the family for a great many years ; that he had always shown himself faithful, silent on occasion, and honest; that he was a gentleman of most ingenious mind and great parts ; that not only Mr. Forster but also Lady Crewe entirely trusted him. Wherefore, if any distrust should arise in the minds of these, or either of these two, it could be none other than the work of a private enemy ; and I plainly bade Mr. Patten beware, lest, through any hostility of his own, he should cause such a distrust, because, in such a case, he would have others besides

Mr. Hilyard to encounter, and the truth should be wholly laid before the Bishop.

He protested again that nothing was farther from his thoughts than to create any such mischief; that he was a man who loved peace and friendship, and so forth. But he looked angry and troubled, his fat lips shook, and his small pig-like eyes winked.

Enough of this villain for the present.

CHAPTER XI.

DAPHNE.

I HAVE not yet spoken of our most honoured visitors, the three Radcliffe brothers. They all came often, but the eldest most often. The reason of his coming you shall presently discover. As for all the three, though they conformed to our customs, and especially in the hospitality for which the north is famous (to the destruction of many a fine estate), they loved not to sit long over their wine, and left the table when the night was yet young, and the bottle but just beginning. The example of Lord Derwentwater's manners shamed our young gentlemen of their rusticity, though it drove them not from the whisky punch. Thus Tom, for instance, began to take part in discourse which was serious and grave, as ladies like it. With the assistance

of Mr. Hilyard and my lord, we held a great many conversations on those curious matters —theological, philosophical, scientific, and so forth—which do most concern the soul. To recall some of these old conversations of a happy time, the question was once argued by us whether Abraham was not the first institutor of public schools; and again, why the Fallen Angel is called alike the Son of the Morning and the Prince of Darkness; and another, whether a good painter may not draw a face better and more beautiful than any yet made; and whether it is right for a good patriot, who loves his country, and should desire to beget children for its defence, to become a monk or a nun; whether eyes or tongue help most to love; why a wet sheet tied round a cask prevents the liquor from freezing in the hardest weather; whether the fall of Lucifer was the occasion of the creation of the world; what is the best argument to prove the existence of God; whether the death-watch gives a long or a short notice; why Alexander called his horse Bucephalus; how the flying of kites may be improved to the public advantage; why fish taken from

the salt sea taste fresh ; what sort of Government is best ? who are Gog and Magog ? why the stork is never found except in a Republic ; who was the father of Louis XIV. ? whether the best times are already past, or are yet to come—with many other questions and curious problems, invented or found for us by Mr. Hilyard, who enriched every discussion with so great a flow of learning as astonished those able to follow and understand him. It was pleasing at these times to observe the shamefacedness of those gallant boys, Perry Widdrington and Ned Swinburne ; how they listened, and pretended to be regarding the speaker and his manner of dealing with the subject in hand ; and how, presently, they either fell asleep or stole gently away, and so to their tobacco and October.

'My lord,' said Tom, 'is a gentleman of the finest breeding ; yet, hang it, he won't drink ! He can ride with the best, and shoot with the best—pity that so strong a man should have head so weak.'

'In Paris,' I replied, 'it is, happily, not the fashion for gentlemen to drink.'

'Na—na. Fashion—fashion! we gentlemen of the north care nothing for fashion. Drinking will never go out of fashion in this country. A man ought to sit with the company and see the bottle out, not to get up with a "By your leave, gentlemen," and so off to the women before the toast goes round half-a-dozen times. Let me tell you, sister, my lord and his brothers will never be truly popular till they learn to take their glasses about with the rest.'

Tom was wrong, because the Earl's good heart made him everywhere beloved. It is better, methinks, to carry all hearts by generosity and virtue than to be popular in a company of gentlemen for strength of head, like any Timothy Tosspot. Why, Mr. Hilyard was popular among those who knew nothing of his scholarship and fine qualities, because he was never known to fall under the table while there was another man still sitting up. Any brewer's man may become popular for the same cause.

'My Lord Derwentwater,' said Mr. Hilyard himself, who was not, in spite of his own practice, a respecter of those who love strong

drink—see how men can admire virtue, and even love her, yet still practise what they despise! 'My lord is all goodness, I think. He reads books; he hath received a liberal education from the Jesuit Fathers, and can quote from Tully, the Mantuan, and even the great Epicurean poet. It is long, indeed, since so great a nobleman was also so good a scholar. At the University of Oxford, alas! the sons of gentlemen and noblemen are encouraged to pass their time in any pursuit rather than reading. And in Northumberland the gentlemen have been too busy, until late years, upon their Border frays to regard learning greatly. My lord is truly a Phœnix among them. Pity that he still adheres to the old religion. Faith, Miss Dorothy, may surpass reason; but must not oppose it. Yet, as hath been well observed, religion lieth not so much in the understanding as in the practice.'

Thus it happened that on many occasions my lord would leave the gentlemen over their cups and sit with me, conversing on all kinds of subjects, such as his relations with the Prince, his life in Paris, and his projects for the future. He opened up his mind to me

in such a way as only a young man, in the society of a woman whom he trusts, can open his mind. I may truly say that I found him always inclined to good works, of the most benevolent disposition, and full of kindness, without any meanness, vice, or blemish in his character. Why do I say these things? His nobleness is so well known that for me to add my testimony is but like carrying coals to Newcastle. One thing I learned very plainly, that my lord, though of so great a name and estate, desired nothing in the world so much as to remain in ease and retirement; to be what his great-grandfather had been (there is no happier lot in the world), a plain country gentleman, and so to live and die. Yet with such loyalty that he knew well, and acknowledged, that when the Prince's followers made a serious effort, he too, at risk of all, must arise and go with them. Wherefore he prayed daily that the voice of the nation might pronounce — yea, shout loudly—for the Prince, so that a restoration, not a rebellion, might follow. But for vapouring conspirators he had no patience, and to such he would never listen.

'It gives me pleasure,' he said (so kindly was his heart) 'to converse with you, fair Miss Dorothy; nowhere else do I find so kind a listener. For if I talk with my brother Frank, he presently flies into a rage at the country's treatment of Catholics; and if to my aunts, they reproach me for lukewarmness towards the Church, whereas, Heaven knows —but that may pass; and if to your brother, he falls into his cups, and then he may say one knows not what. There is wisdom in your face—which I have made to blush—forgive me. Dorothy,' he whispered, 'have your lovers never written any verses on your blushing cheeks?'

I told him that gentlemen in Northumberland do not make verses on ladies at all.

Afterwards I told this pretty compliment (which was made with all respect) to Mr. Hilyard, who laughed, and said that it was high time for the Muses to exchange Parnassus for the Cheviot, or for Spindleston Heugh at least.

Then my lord began to tell me of the ways in Paris, and how the ladies were called by names other than their own sometimes a

name made by an anagram, and sometimes by a name taken from classical story.

'As for you,' he said, 'you should be called Daphne, after the nymph who was turned into a laurel. Daphne or Dorothy, which may I call you?'

We were walking along the south bank of the stream, where it rises in a hill, and is covered with hanging woods. Tom was gone a-shooting, and, though it was late in the year, the yellow leaves were still upon the trees, and there were flowers yet among the grass.

'Daphne, or Dorothy—which?'

'Oh! my lord, I am a plain country girl, and know not the language of gallantry.'

'Heavens!' he replied. 'If such a face could be seen in the land where this language is talked! But that, fair Daphne, is impossible. The French ladies are *gracieuses*, but they have not the beautiful face and figure of our English women, any more than their country has the charms of this, which is surely the garden of all the world.'

Could any woman hear such things said to her for the first time, and by a man so young, so handsome, and so noble, and not lose her

heart? Why, I am proud to think that this divine young man made love to me; it makes me happy to remember it. I confess that I was ready to give him my hand and my heart. I should be ashamed of myself now if I had not been ready, because it would argue a head so insensible that a negro of New Guinea would scorn. And yet, whether I be believed or no, I declare that I had no thought of securing a coronet and a great estate. This was so. I was a simple country girl, but of an honourable house; a Radcliffe could do a Forster no honour by marrying her. I was unused to the polite world, ignorant of courts, and untrained in arts of coquetry. Again, I had no knowledge of a woman's power, nor could I lure a man; nor did I know aught of the strength and passion of love, jealousy, or rivalry, save for the things Mr. Hilyard read to me out of Ovid—such as the stories of Cephalus and Procris, Hero and Leander, Sappho and Phaon. It was by no arts of mine that my lord was attracted to my side. Yet a woman is not a stock or a stone; and when I saw that he loved me—why, truly, I need say no more.

Some days after he called me Daphne I found lying on my table, written in a feigned hand, a copy of most beautiful verses. Who could doubt the poet ?

'Like apple-blossom, white and red;
Like hues of dawn, which fly too soon;
Like bloom of peach, so softly spread;
Like thorn of May and rose of June—
Oh, sweet! oh, fair! beyond compare,
Are Daphne's cheeks,
Are Daphne's blushing cheeks, I swear.

'That pretty rose, which comes and goes,
Like April sunshine in the sky,
I can command it when I choose—
See how it rises if I cry,
Oh, sweet! oh, fair! beyond compare,
Are Daphne's cheeks,
Are Daphne's blushing cheeks, I swear.

'Ah! when it lies round lips and eyes,
And fades away, again to spring,
No lover, sure, could ask for more
Than still to cry, and still to sing:
Oh, sweet! oh, fair! beyond compare,
Are Daphne's cheeks,
Are Daphne's blushing cheeks, I swear.'

Never, sure, were verses more beautiful. I read them again and again. I took them to bed with me, just as a little maid takes her

doll with her. I knew them all by heart, and blushed—

> 'That pretty rose, which comes and goes,
> Like April sunshine in the sky'—

whenever I said them to myself. Who could have written them but my lord? I waited for his next visit, and showed the lines to him, thinking he would have confessed. Ah! the pretender! He read them with an air of astonishment so natural that it might have imposed upon any, so that I did not dare charge him with what he was too modest to acknowledge.

'Daphne,' he said, 'they are pretty verses indeed. I would I could find such rhymes to fit my thoughts. Prior himself hath never written better. Alas! why am I not a poet?'

So he read them again, and when he read the last lines,

> 'Oh, sweet! oh, fair! beyond compare,
> Are Daphne's cheeks,
> Are Daphne's blushing cheeks, I swear,'

he stooped and kissed my hand, saying:

'Ah! Dorothy, are there in all the world cheeks more sweet than thine?'

Thus we talked, and in such sweet discourse the days passed by. I have sometimes wondered whether Tom suspected that, while he was tramping the moors, fowling-piece in hand, Lord Derwentwater was turning his sister's head with compliments, and stealing away her heart. Mr. Hilyard knew and witnessed all, but I understand not why he grew every day more gloomy, insomuch that Tom declared he now wanted six glasses of punch at least before he became moderately cheerful. Why should he not, since he protested so much affection for me, be the happier for my happiness? And why should he, when I went singing, go with his head hanging? He ought, further, to have been happy because Lord Derwentwater noticed him kindly, condescended to ask his opinion on many matters of importance, and listened gravely to his conversation.

'Such a man,' he said, 'would in France be a poet and wit in the service of some great lord, or he would be a hanger-on of ladies' *salons* and *ruelles*, making verses for them, writing operas and comedies. He would be admitted to the suppers of princes, where he

would sing and recite and play a thousand monkey tricks. He would be just such a man as Boisrobert, the favourite of the Cardinal fifty years ago, or Benserade, or Voiture, or any of them. He would be an abbé at least, and presently would get something, a canonry, a prebend's stall, or even a parish. What can such a man do in England ?'

Such a man might, Mr. Hilyard himself told me, go to London, find a patron, write plays, and perhaps obtain a place; or he might be the starving wit of a coffee-house, the hack of a publisher, and die in a garret.

'It is melancholy,' Lord Derwentwater continued, 'to see so fine a scholar thus wasted and thrown away. Not,' he added, 'that any man can be thrown away to whom it is allowed to sit daily in your presence and to hear your voice. But a man of such vast reading, with a memory so prodigious, should have climbed high up the ladder by now. He should be a Court Chaplain, or a Dean; whereas what is the poor man but a Jack Pudding in the evening and a steward in the morning ? A play-actor need not know

Greek nor a steward Hebrew. And when Tom Forster marries—what ?'

'Mr. Hilyard will always have one friend,' I said. 'Who loves me must love him too.'

'I would love an ape for your sake,' he replied. 'Therefore I find it easy to love this ingenious gentleman and unfortunate scholar.'

So, one day, I ventured to ask the poor man why he grew so melancholy.

He said, first of all, that he was not melancholy, but brimful of spirits and joy, to prove which he heaved a deep sigh.

'Nay,' I said, 'but I know the contrary. Tell me—why, surely you, to whom I owe so much gratitude, cannot think I am careless of your concerns. Tell me, dear friend, if it is anything I can help.'

'It is nothing that you can help,' he said. 'I am, in truth, the most ungrateful dog in the world not to be jumping about and singing all day to give you pleasure;' and yet here he fetched another sigh. 'I think of the future, when you will go and I remain. But since you will be happy, what matters it for me ?'

'Oh, Mr. Hilyard! I could not be happy if you were miserable. We have been com-

panions so long. Do you think I could ever forget your readings and your talk, from which I have learned all I know? Nay—but let me whisper one thing. See—there is one who—who—pretends to find pleasure in my society. He knows very well that he who loves me must love my Mr. Hilyard as well.'

Mr. Hilyard hath a heart full of sensibility. He bowed and kissed my hand, and said nothing. But tears were running down his cheeks.

END OF VOL. I.

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